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ABSTRACT

A federally funded project was undertaken at the University of New Hampshire to: (1) determine the feasibility of incorporating specific techniques of oral proficiency evaluation in college-level foreign language courses, (2) create a network of foreign language professors in northern New England colleges and universities trained in the use of oral proficiency evaluation procedures, and (3) develop a handbook of oral proficiency evaluation techniques for college-level foreign language faculty. The utility and effectiveness of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages/Educational Testing Service Oral Proficiency Interview in this context were also examined. Use of this instrument was found to be feasible at the college level, providing the benefits of more objective evaluation of oral skills, potential for increased student motivation, and a positive impact on curriculum, materials, and instructional techniques development. It is suggested that the process may be even more useful at the department level. Answers to questions often asked by faculty about the procedures and results of oral proficiency testing were provided, and additional questions emerged for further investigation. (MSE)

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FINAL REPORT

PROJECT OPT

A Study of Oral Proficiency Testing in College-Level Foreign Language Courses

ED264729

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PROJECT OPT

A Study of Oral Proficiency Testing in
College-level Foreign Language Classes

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2. Oral Proficiency Testing. Handout for Workshop for the Foreign Language Teachers of Nashua, New Hampshire. March 25, 1983.
3. Oral Proficiency Testing in Russian. Handout for Workshop for the Northern New England Chapter of the American Association of Slavic and East European Languages.
4. Testing Oral Proficiency Through the Interview. Handout for the Workshop in Foreign Teaching, Rivier College, 1984.
5. POPT (Publication of Project OPT). Volume I, Number 1 (March, 1984) and Number 2 (Fall, 1984).

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Barbara H. Wing and Alexandra F. Mayewski

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Chapter One

INTRODUCTION

PURPOSE OF THE PROJECT

In the post-Sputnik era, "language for communication" emerged as the major goal of foreign language programs in the United States. Techniques and materials for developing oral skills began to replace more traditional approaches to modern language teaching in classrooms at all levels. To achieve the goal of communication, however, foreign language educators realized that evaluation plays as important a role in the teaching/learning process as curriculum development and classroom instructional methods. They recognized the critical need to develop procedures and instruments to evaluate foreign language proficiency in the four skills and in the speaking skill in particular.

PROJECT OPT was a research and training project in oral proficiency testing in college-level foreign language courses conducted at the University of New Hampshire under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education in 1982-84. It was designed to achieve three objectives:

1. to determine the feasibility of incorporating specific techniques of oral proficiency evaluation in foreign language courses at the college level;

2. to create a network of foreign language professors in northern New England colleges and universities trained in the use of oral proficiency evaluation procedures; and

3. to develop a handbook of oral proficiency evaluation techniques for college-level foreign language faculty.

RATIONALE FOR THE PROJECT

A concerted effort to develop valid and reliable techniques for assessing oral proficiency in academic settings began in 1979. The publication of the report of the President's Commission on Foreign Language and International Studies, Strength Through Wisdom (1979), served as a catalyst to the academic community. In response to the Commission's recommendation that language proficiency goals and guidelines be established, the American Council on the

Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL) and the Educational Testing Service (ETS) initiated several projects related to oral proficiency testing. The primary result of these efforts was the ACTFL/ETS oral proficiency interview, a procedure based on the original Foreign Service Institute model but adapted to meet the needs of academic settings.

The ACTFL/ETS projects focused on the development of procedures and the training of college faculty in use of the techniques of interviewing and rating. Both the developers, who of necessity were the first trainers, and the trainees accumulated considerable knowledge and experience through use of the techniques in workshops and subsequent applications on home campuses. A comprehensive implementation of these techniques seemed a reasonable and needed next step in the development process. PROJECT OPT was designed to fulfill that need.

The three objectives of PROJECT OPT provided the framework for examining the utility and effectiveness of the ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Interview in the context of college-level foreign language courses. This examination focused on factors relevant to the outcomes of training and the implementation of specific techniques for assessing oral proficiency in academic settings.

ORGANIZATION OF THE REPORT

This report of the project discusses how the three objectives were realized. Each objective is considered as a separate, albeit related, component of the project and is treated in the chronological order in which it occurred. The three components are: (1) the training and networking component, (2) the research component, and (3) the materials development and dissemination component. Appendices containing documents used in the project complete this report.

Chapter Two

THE TRAINING AND NETWORKING COMPONENT

The first phase of PROJECT OPT consisted of a training component in which foreign language faculty from colleges and universities in the northern New England area received instruction in the use of the ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Interview. This section of the report describes several aspects of the training component. Also discussed are the networking activities that resulted from participation in the project.

OVERVIEW OF THE TRAINING COMPONENT

The training component of the project, which was modeled on the first ACTFL oral proficiency training workshop held in Houston in February of 1982, consisted of an intensive four-day workshop, a practicum on the home campus, and a two-day follow-up workshop. The Directors of the project worked closely with the Workshop Coordinator, Judith Liskin-Gasparro of the Educational Testing Service and with C. Edward Scebold, Executive Director of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, to develop an agenda that would provide the necessary training and fulfill the requirements of the research component of the project.

SELECTION OF PARTICIPANTS

Participation in the project was limited to professors engaged in teaching college-level foreign language courses. The college-university level was selected because of three factors:

1. Interest on the home campus of the principal investigators.
2. Previous successful training workshops for post-secondary level professors of foreign languages.
3. The potential for influence on other levels associated with college-level foreign language teaching.

Languages included in the project were initially the most commonly taught in post-secondary institutions in the United States and in northern New England: French, German, and Spanish. At the request of the Dean of the Middlebury College Russian School and others, Russian was added to the list of

languages, thus providing the first training opportunities for professors of that language.

Faculty rosters, obtained from department chairpersons, constituted the list of 240 possible participants who received an announcement of the project. The original design called for thirty participants with ten persons in each of the three languages of French, German, and Spanish. Because of the nature of the applicant pool and the requests for training in Russian, the final group consisted of eight French, four German, four Russian, and nine Spanish professors. These 25 workshop participants represented 14 colleges and universities in the states of Maine, Massachusetts, New Hampshire, New York, and Vermont.

THE TRAINING WORKSHOP

The four-day intensive training workshop was held on January 3 through 7, 1983 at the University of New Hampshire in Durham, N.H. The agenda for the workshop included intensive training in the design, administration, and scoring of oral proficiency tests using the ACTFL/ETS oral proficiency interview and rating procedures. Judith Liskin-Gasparro, Senior Evaluator for the Educational Testing Service and a primary developer of the ACTFL/ETS oral proficiency interview, served as Workshop Coordinator and Consultant in Spanish. Dr. Pardee Lowe, Chief of Testing for the Central Intelligence Agency Language School and the principal designer of oral proficiency evaluation techniques for the U.S. government, was Consultant in German and Russian. Dr. Alice Omaggio, Assistant Professor of French at the University of Illinois (Champagne-Urbana) and an author of the ACTFL Proficiency Guidelines, was Consultant in French. Each participant received a copy of the ETS Oral Proficiency Testing Manual, which was used as the primary text for the entire project.

TRAINING AND PROJECT INTERVIEWS

Consistent with the training programs designed by ACTFL and ETS for oral proficiency interviewers, participants in PROJECT OPT returned to their home campuses after the four-day intensive workshop and conducted two sets of

interviews between the period of January 8 and May 15, 1983.

Training interviews. Participants conducted and rated eight interviews on the home campus using students from all levels of proficiency. Tapes of three randomly-selected interviews of each participant were critiqued by the three workshop consultants and Mrs. Maria Casey of the CIA Language School who critiqued the tapes of the four Russian participants. Following receipt of the written critique, each participant was contacted by telephone by the appropriate consultant. The purpose of this conversation was to provide an opportunity to receive further clarification and suggestions for conducting the second round of interviews.

Project interviews. After the written and telephone critiques, participants conducted 16 more oral interviews in two designated groups. The eight interviews in Group A were conducted using students who were currently studying with the interviewer. The eight interviews in Group B were conducted using students who had not studied, nor were currently studying, with the interviewer. This procedure was used to collect data for the research component of the project and will be discussed more fully in the next chapter of this report.

To provide the necessary objectivity for unbiased evaluation, the project interviews were critiqued by a second set of consultants who were experienced testers and raters. These consultants were:

French: Dr. Carol Murphy, University of Florida

German: Dr. Heidi Byrnes, Georgetown University

Russian: Dr. Ellen Mitchell, Defense Language Institute

Spanish: Dr. Frank Medley, University of South Carolina

Four randomly-selected tapes, consisting of two tapes from Group A (students known by the participant) and two from Group B (students not known by the participant) were critiqued using evaluation procedures identical to those employed in the practice interview phase. Report procedures were different and are described below.

FOLLOW-UP WORKSHOP

A follow-up workshop was held at the University of New Hampshire on August 5-7, 1983. At that time, participants met with the Directors, the Workshop Coordinator, and the second set of consultants who had critiqued the project tapes. In the absence of Dr. Heidi Byrnes, Consultant in German, Dr. Ilse Christoph of the CIA Language School, served as consultant in German. During the two-day workshop, further training in interviewing, situation development and rating was provided. A sample interview in each language was videotaped and group discussions on implications for curriculum and materials development were held.

NETWORKING ACTIVITIES

Under the leadership of the directors of PROJECT OPT, the participants in the project formed the nucleus of a network of professors interested in oral proficiency testing in northern New England. During the second year of the project, a newsletter entitled POPT (Publication of Project OPT), served as a vehicle of communication among participants. (See Chapter Four.)

Several oral proficiency workshops were conducted by the directors and participants, both in the geographical region of the project and in other parts of the country to stimulate interest in the network. (See Chapter Five.) Although funding for the project has ceased, the network is continuing to function and have an impact on foreign language teaching, expecially in the state of New Hampshire. This impact is discussed in Chapter Five of this report.

Chapter Three

THE RESEARCH COMPONENT

The research component constituted the principal objective of PROJECT OPT: to determine the feasibility of incorporating specific techniques of oral proficiency evaluation in foreign language courses at the college level. This chapter describes the research questions, population and sample, plan of action, instrumentation, data collection and analysis procedures, and results of the study that was conducted at the University of New Hampshire in 1982-84.

RESEARCH QUESTIONS

The study was a descriptive one in which the primary purpose was to gather and analyze data relative to the feasibility of incorporating specific techniques of oral proficiency evaluation in foreign language classes at the college level. Nine research questions formed the basis for investigation:

1. Can professors learn to conduct and rate oral proficiency interviews effectively after completing an intensive four-day training workshop?
2. What demands, in terms of time needed for preparation, administration, and scoring of the oral proficiency test, does use of the oral proficiency interview make upon professors?
3. What special conditions, facilities, and equipment do professors need to use the oral proficiency interview?
4. What impact does the oral proficiency interview have upon the curriculum, the instructional materials, and the procedures used to achieve the goals of the course?
5. What presage and context variables are associated with successful use of the oral proficiency interview?
6. What problems do professors encounter when using the oral proficiency interview in a foreign language course?
7. What further training is necessary to help professors test oral proficiency in their courses?
8. What differences, if any, appear in the interviewing and rating

techniques of professors when interviewing their own students and students whom they do not know?

9. What proficiency levels are associated with typical levels of instruction (beginning, intermediate, advanced) at the college level?

These questions addressed four major areas of concern:

1. Efficacy of training in oral proficiency techniques: Question 1.
2. Factors related to use of the oral proficiency interview in college-level foreign language courses: Questions 2 through 7.
3. Factors related to rating one's own students: Question 8.
4. Relationships between proficiency levels and instructional levels: Question 9.

POPULATION AND SAMPLE

The population for this study consisted of all French, German, Russian, and Spanish professors who were teaching in a college or university in the northern New England states of Maine, New Hampshire, and Vermont during the 1982-83 academic year. Faculty rosters, obtained from department chairpersons, were used to personally invite the 240 eligible professors to participate.

The original design called for a sample of thirty participants with ten professors in each of the three languages of French, German, and Spanish. Because of (1) the nature of the applicant pool and (2) requests by several Russian professors, including the Director of the Middlebury College Russian Summer School, the final sample, which was self-selected, consisted of eight French, four German, four Russian, and nine Spanish professors. They came from public (14) and private (11) colleges (17) and universities (8) in the state of Maine (4), Massachusetts (2), New Hampshire (11), New York (2), and Vermont (6). One participant in French withdrew from the project in the training phase and the data from one Spanish participant did not arrive in time for analysis.

PLAN OF ACTION

The study consisted of six phases as follows:

Phase 1: October 1982 to January 1983: Design of research procedures and instruments. Included development of self-report questionnaire for data collection; planning of training workshop; promotion, publicity and recruitment of participants; coordination of workshop activities, meals, and lodging. Accomplished by the directors of the project in consultation with the Workshop Coordinator, Judith Liskin-Gasparro of the Educational Testing Service.

Phase 2: January 3-7, 1983:

(A) Participant training workshop. Included intensive training in the design, administration, and scoring of oral proficiency tests using the ACTFL/ETS oral interview and rating procedures. (See Chapter Two.)

(B) Collection of data relative to variables associated with presage and context variables. (See Instrumentation section below.) Preparation for participant project in oral proficiency interviewing and rating.

Phase 3: January 8 - May 15, 1983:

(A) Participant project implementation on home campuses. Participants completed a project using the techniques learned at the training workshop. This project consisted of conducting and rating a set of eight training interviews and a second set of 16 project interviews.

1. Training interviews: 8 interviews were conducted and rated by participants using students from all levels of proficiency. Three randomly-selected tapes of each participant were critiqued by the language consultants from the training workshop. These consultants sent a written report to the participants and subsequently spoke by telephone with the participants to provide further clarification and suggestions for conducting the second set of interviews.
2. Project interviews: After the written and telephone critiques, participants conducted 16 project interviews in

two designated groups. The eight interviews in Group A were conducted using students who were currently studying with the participant. The eight interview candidates in Group B were drawn from a pool of students who had not studied nor were currently studying with the participants.

(B) Data collection: Upon completion of the 16 project interviews, participants supplied data relative to their experiences in using the procedures (See Instrumentation section below).

Phase 4: May 15 - August 4, 1983

(A) Critique of participant project tapes by a second set of consultants. Four randomly-selected tapes, consisting of two tapes from Group A (students studying with the participant and two from Group B (students not known to participant) were critiqued by the following consultants who were trained evaluators and raters:

French: Dr. Carol Murphy, University of Florida

German: Dr. Heidi Burns, Georgetown University

Russian: Dr. Ellen Mitchell, Defense Language Institute

Spanish: Dr. Frank Medley, University of South Carolina

(B) Data collection: The consultants (hereafter called "evaluators") provided data relative to: (1) their perception of the relationship of interviewer and candidate and (2) their evaluation of the participants' rating and evaluation techniques.

(C) Development of plans for follow-up workshop held in August.

Phase 5: August 5-7, 1983: Participant Follow-Up Workshop: Participants returned to the campus of the University of New Hampshire to meet with the Directors, the Workshop Coordinator, and the Evaluators to discuss projects, problems, and future needs.

Phase 6: Completion of project: Final preparation of the Handbook, completion of the data analysis, and preparation of the Final Report of the project.

INSTRUMENTATION

Three instruments were designed to collect data for the study:

1. Questionnaire I: Participant Questionnaire
2. Questionnaire II: Participant Project Report
3. Questionnaire III: Consultant Report of Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques

In addition, several forms were developed to collect additional relevant data Examples of the three questionnaires and the forms used in the study are found in Appendix B.

Questionnaire I: Participant Questionnaire

This instrument, which was administered to all participants on the second day of the training workshop, provided data pertaining to teacher presage variables (teacher characteristics and training experiences) and to context variables (course and program objectives, instructional techniques and materials). The four sections of the questionnaire focused on (1) preparation, (2) professional development, (3) curriculum and instruction, and (4) background information. (See Appendix B for a copy of this questionnaire).

The primary function of this questionnaire was to supply data about the characteristics of the sample used in the study. The two intended purposes were: to determine (1) what kinds of professors are likely to seek training in oral proficiency evaluation and (2) what relationships, if any, exist between the presage and content variables investigated in the questionnaire and success in training. These purposes relate to research question 1.

Questionnaire II: Participant Project Report

This instrument, which was completed by participants upon finishing the set of 16 project tapes, provided data pertaining to experiences and attitudes related to use of the oral proficiency evaluation techniques. The six principal sections of the questionnaire dealt with (1) time factors, (2) facilities and equipment used, (3) the specific course from which Group A interview candidates (students of the interviewer) were drawn, (4) experiences

with interview candidates in Group A (students studying with the participant) and Group B (students unknown to the participant), (5) problems encountered in interviewing and rating and (6) need for further interviewer training and development of oral proficiency evaluation techniques. (See Appendix B for a copy of this questionnaire.)

The primary function of this questionnaire was to supply data in order to answer research questions 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7.

Questionnaire III: Consultant Report of Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques

This instrument, which was completed by the four language-specific evaluators who critiqued the project interviews, provided data relative to participant techniques. The three sections focused on (1) elicitation techniques, (2) rating known and unknown students, (3) a global rating of elicitation and rating techniques. (See Appendix B for a copy of this questionnaire.)

The primary function of this questionnaire was to provide answers to research questions 1, 5, and 8 of the study.

Miscellaneous instruments

In addition to the three questionnaires, several forms were developed to report relevant data at various stages of the project. These included:

1. Participant Rating Sheet for Practice Interviews
2. Participant Rating Sheet for Project Interviews
3. Participant Project Log
4. Evaluator Rating Sheet

Examples of these instruments are found in Appendix B.

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data for the study were collected, using the previously-described instruments, according to the following schedule:

1. Questionnaire I, Participant Profile: 5 January 1983
2. Questionnaire II, Participant Project Report: 15 May, 1983

3. Questionnaire III, Consultant Report of Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques, 15 July 1983

Data analysis was accomplished in the following manner for each of the questionnaires:

1. Questionnaire I: Responses were totaled and reported in terms of frequencies and, when appropriate, in percentages. (See Appendix C.)
2. Questionnaire II: Given the open-ended nature of the items, responses were analyzed and subsumed into principal categories. These were reported in frequencies and, when appropriate, in percentages. (See Appendix C.)
3. Questionnaire III: Responses were totaled and reported in terms of frequencies and percentages. (See Appendix C.)

RESULTS OF THE STUDY

The results of the data analysis are reported below in two sections related to the characteristics of the sample and the research questions investigated in the study.

Characteristics of the sample

The data collected in Questionnaire I, Participant Questionnaire, pertained to teacher presage variables (teacher characteristics and teacher training experiences) and to context variables (course objectives, instructional techniques and materials). Because of the self-selective nature of the sampling process, the data provide information on the kind of professor who is likely to want to become involved in oral proficiency testing.

In addition to this descriptive function, the data was originally intended to be used to determine possible relationships between presage and context variables, on the one hand, and demonstrated success in using the oral proficiency test, on the other hand. This analysis was not realized because of two factors: (1) the small size of the sample in the language-specific groups (French n = 7, German n = 4, Russian n = 4, and Spanish n = 9) and (2)

the impossibility of determining interrater reliability coefficients across the four language groups.

The raw data from the questionnaire, reported in frequencies are found in Appendix C. An analysis of these data follows.

Presage Variables: Characteristics. The typical participant in this study was likely to be male (54%), over 38 years of age (54%), a native speaker of English (71%), a recipient of the Ph.D. (58%) in literature (67%), non-tenured (58%), and a veteran of at least four years of teaching at the college level (66%). Implications of these data include the following:

1. Despite the fact that tenure-track positions in foreign language departments are predominantly held by men, women are almost equally represented in this study.
2. Older faculty members are interested in learning about and implementing new techniques of language pedagogy.
3. While non-tenured faculty members, who often bear the responsibility for teaching and coordinating language courses, outnumber tenured professors, the relatively high participation of the latter indicates interest on the part of the continuing faculty, who hold the real power in departments, in improving instruction.
4. Professors who received their doctorates in literature recognize the need to keep abreast of new developments in the teaching and learning of foreign languages.
5. Experienced faculty members seek professional enrichment in the area of foreign language pedagogy.

Presage Variables: Teacher Training experiences. As undergraduates, slightly more than a third of the participants either received academic credit for a study-abroad program in the target country (38%) or lived or travelled for more than three months in such a country (33%). Similarly, slightly more than a third of the participants took a formal course in foreign language methodology (38%) while (42%) student-taught a foreign language.

At the graduate level, less than one third of the participants received

academic credit for study abroad (29%) but more than half lived or travelled for more than three months in a target country. At this level, slightly more than a third had taken a formal course in foreign language methodology (38%) but almost three-quarters of the participants taught a language course (71%).

Based on these data and allowing for overlap between undergraduate and graduate experiences, it is likely that slightly more than half of the participants had received credit for study in a target country and/or lived or travelled for more than three months in a target country. The implication is that these participants had had the opportunity to develop their own oral proficiency and cultural awareness while in the target country as part of their professional training experiences. In addition, it is likely that half of the participants had taken a formal course in foreign language methodology while at least three-quarters had taught language courses before completing their degree.

Presage Variables: Professional Growth. Several questions related to professional growth and involvement can be interpreted as an index of interest in and awareness of new developments in the field. At least three quarters of the participants had spent a week or more in a target country in the past three years while virtually all (96%) of the participants were members of a foreign language professional organization. Two thirds usually or always attend a session on foreign language methodology at professional meetings and almost half (46%) regularly read professional journals of foreign language teaching. One third reported that they had previously attended some type of oral profiency evaluation workshop. Thus, the participants manifested interest in maintaining their own oral skills as well as keeping up with developments in the profession.

Context variables. Context variables refer to aspects of curriculum and instruction that affect learning and teaching. Data collected in this study provided a description of the kinds of objectives, teaching methodologies, and evaluation procedures used in the various departments represented by the

participants. Three levels of instruction (elementary, intermediate, and advanced) were compared.

At the elementary and intermediate levels, three quarters of the participants reported use of stated departmental oral objectives for courses, while at the advanced level only 29% reported having specific oral objectives. Half of the participants reported that the student's speaking ability constitutes at least 20% of the grade at the elementary level while only one quarter indicated the same percentage at the intermediate level and slightly less (21%) at the advanced level. The target language was always or almost always the language of instruction in two thirds of the courses at the elementary and intermediate levels (63%) and in almost three quarters (71%) at the advanced level. At the elementary level, 83% of the participants reported giving speaking tests at least once a semester. This percentage declined to 63% at the intermediate level and 42% at the advanced level. Oral proficiency tests for placement and/or some type of validation, such as fulfilling a requirement for language study, graduation or teacher certification, were reported by one third of the participants.

Analysis of the data indicates that interest in stating oral objectives and formally evaluating oral performance is highest at the elementary level and lowest at the advanced level. This is interesting to note, given the usual practice of offering courses of conversation and composition at the advanced level of language instruction. It would appear that less formal definition and evaluation is used at the advanced level even though classtime is reported to be spent in developing oral skills. Professors may believe that formal objectives and evaluation are not necessary since they are in daily contact with students and can assess their speaking ability without using specific instruments or techniques.

Summary of characteristics of the sample. The typical participant was an experienced, non-tenured professor with the doctorate in literature who had studied or traveled in the target country within the last three years. This person belonged to a professional foreign language association, attended

sessions on methodology at professional meetings, and used speaking objectives and some form of speaking tests in his or her courses. While this profile is probably not typical of the majority of foreign language professors in U.S. colleges and universities, it is likely that at least one such person exists in most departments. The extent to which that person can convince colleagues of the need for and efficacy of oral proficiency evaluation is a critical issue.

Research Questions

The data for addressing the nine research questions of the study were obtained from Questionnaire II, the Participant Project Report, and Questionnaire III, the Consultant Report of Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques. A complete summary of the data is found in Appendix C. Answers to the research questions, based on selected data presented in Tables 1 through 11 are discussed below.

*Question 1. Can professors learn to conduct and rate oral proficiency interviews effectively after completing an intensive four-day workshop and a supervised practicum that includes a critique of 24 interviews?:

The answer to this question is a qualified yes. When the study was conducted, a procedure for certifying new testers had not yet been approved by the Interagency Language Roundtable. Thus it was not possible, at that time, to state definitively if the type and length of training was adequate to lead to certification of a high percentage of the workshop participants. However, the evaluators who critiqued the tapes did judge several criteria related to the participants' performance and potential. Table 1 (see next page) summarizes the data for all participants across the four languages used in the study. As Table 1 indicates, the evaluators gave high ratings to 57% of the participants for interviewing techniques, to 30% for rating techniques, to 70% for potential as a proficient interviewer, and to 65% for potential as a proficient rater. A uniform 13% received low ratings in all categories, with the remaining percentages falling in the average category.

Table 1

Evaluator Critique of Participant Techniques and Potential

ALL LANGUAGES

Criteria	High n/%	Average n/%	Low n/%	Total n/%
Interviewing techniques	13/57%	7/30%	3/13%	23/100%
Accuracy of rating	7/30%	13/57%	3/13%	23/100%
Potential: proficient interviewer	16/70%	4/17%	3/13%	23/100%
Potential: proficient rater	15/65%	5/22%	3/13%	23/100%

Key: High = Top Third
Middle = Middle Third
Low = Bottom Third

Two conclusions can be drawn from the data. In the first place, it is apparent that the intensive training and the interviewing practice of at least 24 interviews are <u>minimal</u> requirements for tester certification. In fact, most experienced testers agree that many more interviews are necessary before one becomes proficient and comfortable in the role of interviewer and rater. In the second place, it is obvious that rating is more problematic than interviewing. The distinctions within and across levels require a thorough understanding of the scale that only comes with experience in using it. The discussion of Question 8 below addresses several aspects of this point.

Since a tester certification procedure now exists and is being implemented by ACTFL/ETS, a more definitive answer to this question will be possible in future workshops. Participants who complete the initial training and practicum now submit tapes and ratings to ACTFL for immediate validation. As a result of this process, data can be gathered to determine immediately the

rate of success as well as the kind of supplementary training needed.

*Question 2. What demands, in terms of time needed for preparation, administration, and scoring, does use of the oral proficiency interview make upon professors?

The amount of time required to conduct an oral proficiency interview, which is of necessity an individual process, is a matter of legitimate concern. Table 2 (see next page) summarizes the reported time spent by participants in preparation for, administration, of and rating of the interview.

The data reveal that beginning interviewers spent an average of 56 minutes; (1) arranging for (13 minutes), (2) conducting (22 minutes), and (3) reviewing (21 minutes) the interview. Almost a quarter of this time was devoted to obtaining the specific type of interviewees needed for the project, with the remaining three quarters was spent in interviewing and rating the taped interview.

As testers gain experience in choosing appropriate questioning techniques, the amount of time needed to obtain a ratable sample is reduced considerably. While there are no set time limits, a Novice-level interview generally lasts from 5-7 minutes, an Intermediate-level about 10-12 minutes and an Advanced-level or Superior-level from 15-20 minutes at the most. Taping the interview provides a record that can be used for delayed rating or to check a rating determined immediately upon completion of the interview. Participants in the study noted a reduction in their own time spent interviewing and rating as they became more practiced over the course of the 16 project interviews.

Participants in the project overwhelmingly (90%) considered the time spent on preparing, interviewing, and rating worthwhile with respect to their own professional development. A large percentage (84%) also believed that the experience was a worthwhile one for students as well. Among the suggestions for making more efficient use of time were: distributing an explanation of the process to students before the interview; rating either

Table 2

Participant Time Report for Preparation, Administration, and Rating of Oral Interviews

Participant ID Number n=23	Mean PREPARATION time per interview	Mean INTERVIEW time per interview	Mean RATING time per interview
1	3 minutes	23 minutes	23 minutes
2	little or none	20	20
4	4	24	23
5	3	24	8
6	10	21	26
7	no data	no data	no data
9	3	18	8
10	20	30	30
11	25	16	40
12	32	30	30
13	6	20	15
14	28	30	34
15	13	21	19
16	7	25	3
18	no data	26	28
19	no data	no data	no data
21	10	17	18
22	no data	no data	no data
23	11	18	11
24	no data	18	15
25	22	24	32
26	15	22	22
27	8	21	19
Mean times for group	13 minutes	22 minutes	21 minutes

Total mean time for preparation, interview, and rating: 56 minutes per interview

during or right after interviewing; using a check list for each level; formulating possible questions, probes and situations before the interview; and shortening interviews, especially at the novice level.

Half of the respondents indicated that time is an inhibiting factor when considering use of the oral proficiency interview in classes of more than ten students. They believed that colleagues would not accept the burden of additional time required for the interview, especially if it were not directly related to the work of the course.

*Question 3. What special conditions, facilities and equipment do professors need to use the oral proficiency interview?

Participants did not indicate a need for special conditions, facilities and equipment, i.e., those not normally available in the department, for conducting the interviews.

TABLE 3

Conditions, Facilities, and Equipment Needed for Oral Interviews

I.	Site used (n=22)	
	Professor's office	16/73%
	Language Laboratory	6/27%
II.	Equipment (n=18)	
	Portable tape recorder	15/83%
	Professional-type equipment	3/17%
III.	Problems in arranging/acquiring site/equipment (n = 22)	
	None	22/100%
IV.	Problems in obtaining clear recordings (n = 16)	
	Background noise	6
	Poor positioning of candidate/equipment	4
	Inexpensive equipment/tapes	4
	Timidity of students	3
V.	Suggestions for obtaining clearer recordings	
	Better equipment ("get the best")	
	Clean recording heads before taping	
	Use high quality new tapes	
	Use soundproof room	
	Place microphones carefully	
	Use lavalier microphones	
	Record on "neutral" territory	
	Have clock visible for interviewer	

As noted in Table 3, three quarters of the participants used their own offices to conduct the interviews while the rest used the language laboratory. Portable tape recorders proved adequate, though some professors reported problems with background noise and low-quality tapes. Students did not appear to be negatively affected by the presence of the tape recorder. It was noted that it is important to make sure that there are no telephone or similar interruptions during the course of the interview.

*Question 4. What impact does the oral proficiency interview have upon the curriculum, the instructional materials, and the procedures used to achieve the goals of the course?

Tables 4 and 5 (see next pages) respectively summarize the data with regard to the impact of oral proficiency testing on (1) the specific course from which participants selected students for the project interviews and (2) courses in general and the overall language program.

The primary impact was perceived to be more emphasis on developing communicative skills by using (1) texts that emphasize oral proficiency goals, (2) task-oriented instructional activities (especially "situations" and small group conversations), and (3) authentic recorded materials in class. It was noted by a third of the participants (the largest percentage of consensus) that the interview has more effect on materials and techniques than on goals and curriculum development. A logical inference from this observation is that the principles and procedures of the oral proficiency interview provide a means of realizing already existing but previously unfulfilled oral goals in the curriculum.

Other areas of impact, as seen in Table 5, included using the oral proficiency interview and rating techniques (1) for placement and/or waiver purposes or as part of the student's permanent record, (2) to establish expected performance levels in courses, (3) to reinforce the importance of oral production, thereby increasing students motivation, and (4) for diagnostic rather than grading purposes.

Table 4

Impact of Oral Proficiency Testing on Curriculum, Instructional Materials, and Procedures Used to Achieve Course Goals

n = 23. All participants did not answer all questions

I.	Goals and curriculum development	
	A. Positive	
	1. More emphasis on communicating, especially speaking, in real situations	7
	2. Relate course objectives to proficiency definitions and grammar grids	2
	3. Already emphasizing oral skills	7
	B. Negative	
	1. Conflict with implications of Krashen's "input hypothesis" (emphasis on listening comprehension)	2
	2. No intention of changing course to fit test	2
	3. Classroom language teaching has little to do with language proficiency	1
II.	Instructional materials	
	A. Positive	
	1. Develop situations and conversation cards	3
	2. Look for texts that relate to oral proficiency goals and techniques	2
	3. Use more authentic recorded material in class	4
	B. No opinion	10
III.	Instructional techniques	
	A. Positive	
	1. Students ask more questions	2
	2. Use task-oriented instructional techniques to simulate real situations, encourage creativity	3
	3. More group work, less drill	4
	B. No opinion	10
IV.	Testing	
	A. Plan to incorporate in some way	10
	B. Other	8
	C. No opinion	4

Table 5

Function of Oral Proficiency Testing in Courses and Programs

I.	Function in specific courses	
	A. Measure student progress (for/not for grade)	5
	B. Motivate students to develop oral skills	5
	C. Diagnose strengths and weaknesses	2
	D. Provide a standard for proficiency and for course design	2
	E. Provide opportunity to use target language in a one-on-one situation for twenty minutes	3
II.	Function in total language program	
	A. Placement purposes	11
	B. Proficiency requirement for (1) language requirement, (2) graduating majors and minors	6
	C. Motivation factor to make students aware of importance of oral proficiency	4
	D. Proficiency ratings for transcript, CV	4
	E. Measure student progress as a result of a JYA experience	2
III.	Colleague Reaction	
	A. Interested ("definitely" to "mildly")	14/61%
	B. Varied ("some yes, others no")	3/13%
	C. Not interested ("no" to "threatened")	6/26%
	D. Blank (all colleagues involved in PROJECT OPT)	1/4%

*Question 5. What presage and context variables are associated with successful use of the oral proficiency interview?

This question was designed to determine what relationships, if any, exist between (1) teacher characteristics, professional training, and experience and (2) success in interviewing and rating. Because of the small sample size in each of the four languages represented in the study (French, 7; German, 4; Russian, 4; and Spanish, 9) the analysis was not carried out. Experience has shown, however, that interviewers should themselves be at Level 3, and preferably 3+, on the Interagency Language Roundtable scale in order to obtain a ratable sample and make accurate rating decisions along the full range of the ACTFL/ETS rating scale in academic situations.

*Question 6. What problems do professors encounter when using the oral proficiency interview in a foreign language course?

Participants were asked to describe the problems they experienced in conducting and rating the interview. A summary of the data is found in Table 6.

Table 6

Problems Encountered in Interviewing and Rating

Percentages indicate proportion of participants who identified the item as a problem.

I. Interviewing

a. Relative difficulty of the phases of the interview.
   - Warm-up.....42%
   - Level Check.....56%
   - Probes.....65%
   - Wind-down.....32%

b. Acting as interviewer, not teacher.....67%
c. Conducting consecutive interviews.....76%
d. Interviewer's own proficiency.....30%

II. Rating

a. Clarity of ACTFL/ETS proficiency descriptions.....57%
b. Concern for ratability of sample.....57%

III. Other problems reported

a. Concern for time spent
b. Role of dialect in assigning rating
c. Use of situations (timing and suitability)

The three most frequently mentioned problems concerned (1) assuming the role of tester in the interview; (2) using probes appropriately in the interview; and (3) assigning an appropriate rating, especially in the Intermediate range.

(1) There are significant differences between the role of teacher and the role of tester. In the classroom, language teachers use several typical behaviors to encourage and reinforce learning. These include cueing responses, prompting students who hesitate, repeating student responses for correction or reinforcement purposes, and reacting with evaluative comments especially when students respond correctly. In the interview, language testers must avoid these kinds of behaviors for a very specific reason: obtaining a ratable sample of the student's language proficiency depends upon an objective approach to interviewing that requires that the student alone show what he/she can and cannot do. Prompting, repeating, and encouraging by means of judgmental feedback on the part of the interviewer do not allow the student to do this. Thus, teacher-testers must learn to wait for answers

without prompting, accept what students say without correcting or evaluating what is said, and permit students to reach the point where they can no longer express themselves comfortably. They must do these things, however, in a non-threatening manner that does not intimidate. Teacher-testers report that it is most difficult to accomplish this when interviewing one's own students (See Question 8 below).

(2) In the interview, probes are used to find out whether or not the speaker can go beyond the estimated level of proficiency. They serve to establish the "ceiling" or highest level at which the speaker can function consistently by taking the speaker to "linguistic breakdown," a point at which the speaker can no longer convey meaning effectively. An interview should include at least three probes in order to show conclusively that the speaker cannot sustain speech at a higher level. Beginning testers often feel awkward putting speakers in such an uncomfortable position once, let alone three times during an interview. They also are not sure of the appropriateness of their probes and may skip a level with the result that the speaker is not tested at a level which he/she might have been able to manage.

(3) Rating the interview requires considerable familiarity with the ACTFL/ETS rating scale and the distinctions between and within levels. In the first place, it is extremely important that raters recognize the characteristics of each of the four base levels (Novice, Intermediate, Advanced, and Superior) in the system. Errors in rating decisions across these major borders indicate significant problems with either the sample or the matching of the sample to the definitions. In the second place, it is important that raters understand the different degrees of proficiency (low, mid, high) within the levels. While errors in assigning these ratings within levels are not as critical as those across levels, they are a matter of concern and should be corrected with additional practice. It should be noted, however, that the ACTFL/ETS definitions were, at the time of the study, still being revised and some were acknowledged to need revision to eliminate possible ambiguities such as those reported by participants.

In addition to the three principal problems, some participants noted that their own proficiency was a matter of concern and that, after conducting more than three interviews in one session, they experienced considerable fatigue and began to repeat questions.

*Question 7. What further training is necessary to help professors test oral proficiency in their courses?

Participants in the study agreed that the training sessions and the 24 critiqued interviews provided them with a basic understanding of the principles and procedures of the evaluation process. They also acknowledged that increased confidence and accuracy in interviewing and rating are a function of experience. They recommended more observation of live or videotaped interviews and additional training, through shorter workshops, especially to determine plus points in level. The need for effective interpersonal skills was also identified. (See Table 7.)

Table 7

Perceived Further Training Needs (Self-evaluation)

1. Practice in:

   A. Interviewing

      1. observe live/videotaped interviews (4)
      2. conduct interviews with partner (2)
      3. be interviewed (1)
      4. practice in varying questions (1)
      5. interpersonal skills (1)

   B. Rating

      1. to determine plus points in level (2)
      2. need critique (1)
      3. more controlled evaluation of results (1)

2. Other:

      1. more time to prepare and do interviews (5)
      2. a course or additional three-day workshop (2)
      3. clear descriptions of novice-high to advanced (1)
      4. become a certified trainer of testers (1)

The evaluators who critiqued the participant tapes indicated a need to provide more training in estimating proficiency during the interview to make appropriate choices of interviewing techniques such as probes and situations. (See Table 8.)

Table 8

Evaluator's Analysis of Participant Interviewing Performance and Need for Further Training

I. Analysis of Participant Interviewing Performance

Strengths:

High occurrence of behaviors:

Treated candidates in friendly manner and spoke at normal speed
Gave candidates feeling of accomplishment
Allowed candidates to talk without interruption

Average occurrence of behaviors:

Made smooth transitions from one phase to another
Stayed with topics long enough
Took candidate to highest level of proficiency

Weaknesses:

Inaccurate estimate of level during interview
Insufficient use of probes and situations at appropriate levels
Excessive use of yes/no questions
Lack of wind-down

II. Areas for further training

Estimating proficiency during interview to make appropriate choices of question type and content
Practice in using probes and situations
Development of thoroughness in interviewing to assure a ratable sample that clearly demonstrates what a candidate can and cannot do

They also identified the excessive use of yes/no questions as an area of concern and noted that participants need to sample several content areas, especially as the interviewee's level of proficiency increases. The ultimate goal is a thoroughness that assures a ratable sample that clearly demonstrates what a candidate can and cannot do when speaking the foreign language.

*Question 8. What differences, if any, appear in the interviewing and rating techniques of professors when interviewing their own students and students whom they do not know?

A critical question is whether or not professors can obtain valid and reliable ratings when interviewing their own students. In many foreign language departments, the number of faculty members teaching a particular language may be limited to one or two professors. Thus, if students are to be interviewed and rated, it must be done by someone who is already familiar with what those students have done in class. The study provided data regarding the

participants' perceptions of rating their own students and the evaluators' perceptions.

While acknowledging that interviewing one's own students is more difficult than interviewing those one does not know, over two thirds of the participants in the study believed that interviews with their own students were as valid and reliable as those with unknown students (See Table 9). Twice as many (6 of 23) felt more comfortable with their own students than with unknown students (3); however, a similar number (7) noted that they had to resist slanting the interview toward known vocabulary and grammar. A third of the participants were surprised at the differences between the ratings and class performance with the usual expectation being a higher rating.

The evaluators who critiqued the participant project tapes completed Questionnaire III in which they provided data on the interviewer elicitation and rating techniques of known and unknown interviewees. Data were also analyzed on the degree of agreement between the participant ratings and the evaluator ratings of the four randomly-selected project tapes that were critiqued by the evaluators. A summary of the comparison of ratings is found in Table 10. Additional tables containing the data from which the comparisons were drawn are found in Appendix C.

The evaluators who critiqued the participant tapes affirmed that, regardless of whether or not the professors were interviewing known or unknown students, 95% of the interviews constituted <u>ratable</u> samples. This finding indicates that, in the opinion of these experienced raters, it is possible to interview one's own students in a valid and a reliable manner by objectively following the procedures for conducting the four phases of the interview.

Rating the interview proved to be more problematic than conducting a rating interview. Based on a stratified sample of all the interviews, the evaluators agreed with 39% of the participants' ratings and disagreed with 61%. When they disagreed, they raised the rating 47% of the time and lowered it 53% of the time. In 82% of the cases of disagreement, the magnitude was one step in the rating scale (from a low to mid, for example). However, in

Table 9

Participant Perceptions of Differences in Interviewing and Rating Known and Unknown Students

1. Differences in your own behavior/feelings while interviewing known/unknown candidates.

More patient, easier with others	3
More relaxed with own	6
Presumed too much about own	1
Had to resist slanting toward known vocabulary and grammar	4
Other	5
None/Blank	2

2. Differences in student behavior/feelings.

Own students more nervous	5
Other students more nervous	4
Other	2
None/Blank	8

3. Differences in own behavior/feelings while rating known/unknown students.

Surprised at difference between class and interview (usually expected higher rating)	7
Other	5
None/Blank	9

4. Are your interviews with your own students as valid and reliable as those with unknown students?

Yes	15
No	2
Not sure	4
Blank	1
Difficult to interview own	4
Difficult to rate own	2

5. Is it possible for interviewer to rate and conduct oral proficiency of own students in valid and reliable manner?

Yes	15
No	0
Blank	8

6. What can evaluator do to get valid and reliable interviews?

Be objective and follow guidelines	13
Have colleague sit in	4
Blank	3
Other	3

Table 10

Comparison of Interviewer and Evaluator Ratings

5 interviews in 92 (5%) judged to be unratable.

1.	Index of agreement/disagreement:	39/61%
2.	When evaluators disagreed with interviewer rating, evaluator:	
	Raised rating:	47%
	Lowered rating:	53%
3.	Magnitude of disagreement:	
	1 rating:	82%
	2 ratings:	18%
4.	Rating own students/other students:	
	Own students:	
	Evaluator agreed:	26%
	disagreed:	74%
	When disagreed, evaluator:	
	raised rating:	44%
	lowered rating:	47%
	non-ratable:	9%
	Other students:	
	Evaluator agreed:	54%
	disagreed:	46%
	When disagreed, evaluator:	
	raised rating:	38%
	lowered rating:	52%
	non-ratable:	10%

the 61% of the cases in which there was disagreement, 49% of the discrepancies were across major boundaries (from Intermediate to Advanced, for example) and 51% were within the same level (from Intermediate-mid to Intermediate-high, for example). In the 49% of cases of discrepancies across major boundaries, 24% occurred from Novice to Intermediate, 52% from Intermediate to Advanced, and 24% from Advanced to Superior.

These findings indicate that beginning raters are likely to agree with experienced evaluators on two out of five interviews. It is interesting to note that the recently implemented ACTFL/ETS criteria for certification as an oral proficiency rater state that "the ratings of the applicant and trainer

must correspond precisely on a minimum of two of the five interviews."

The findings also indicate that when beginning and experienced raters disagree, the magnitude of disagreement is likely to be one step in four out of five cases and two or more in the remaining case. Again comparing this finding with the ACTFL/ETS criteria, a range of one step is permissible, for certification purposes, in three of the five interviews submitted for evaluation. However, the one step discrepancy must be within the same base level and not across a major boundary. The data for study indicated that when beginning and experienced raters disagree, the disagreement is likely to cross a major boundary in one out of two interviews. Furthermore, at least half of the time, the disagreement is found in the Intermediate to Advanced range of the scale. These findings have two important implications for the training of oral proficiency testers: (1) beginning testers need more practice in recognizing the differences between the Intermediate and Advanced levels of the scale, and (2) additional definition is needed in the scale itself to make more apparent the differences between the two levels.

When the data were analyzed to determine differences in rating known and unknown students, the evaluators agreed with the rating of known students 26% of the time and with unknown students 54% of the time. With more than twice the probability of agreement between experienced and inexperienced raters on rating unknown students, it appears that factors associated with previous classroom contact with students do affect a rating given by beginning testers. It is interesting to note, however, that when evaluators disagreed with ratings, they raised them 44% of the time for known students but only 38% of the time for unknown students. It would seem that professors might be compensating for their experience with known students by giving lower ratings.

The statistics support the participant consensus that it is more difficult for beginning testers to rate their own students than to rate students who have not studied with them. A reasonable solution to the dilemma is to have students interviewed by qualified testers, even if the student has studied with the interviewer, and then have the tapes rated by independent

evaluators. When a larger pool of certified testers is available, it will be interesting to continue the study of the validity and reliability of rating one's own students.

*Question 9. What proficiency levels are associated with typical levels of instruction (beginning, intermediate, advanced) at the college level?

Participants in the study interviewed students enrolled in beginning, intermediate, and advanced language classes and in literature and culture classes taught in the foreign language. The resultant data (See Table 11) provides some preliminary information on expected levels of proficiency in each of the typical levels of instruction. It should be noted that the sample (beginning students = 35, intermediate students = 71, advanced students = 28, literature and culture students = 20) is small and includes all four languages (French, German, Russian, and Spanish) of the project. In addition, the ratings were determined by beginning testers involved in a training project. As discussed above, experienced evaluators disagreed with these ratings 61% of the time and lowered the rating 53% of the time. Half of these disagreements involved major boundary decisions (from Intermediate to Advanced, for example) and half involved decisions within levels (from mid to high, for example).

Based on the data reported in Table 11 (see next page), the mean proficiency levels in each level of instruction were:

1. Beginning language courses (1st and 2nd semester)
   - Spanish (n = 20): Novice High
   - Intensive Russian (n = 15): Intermediate Mid

2. Intermediate language courses (3rd and 4th semester)
   - French (n = 32): Intermediate Mid
   - German (n = 24): Advanced
   - Russian (n = 15): Intermediate Mid

3. Advanced language courses (5th and 6th semester)
   - French (n = 8): Intermediate High
   - Spanish (n = 20): Intermediate Mid

Table 11

Relationship of Proficiency Level to Course Level

Course/Language	n	range	x	mode/n
Beg. French	-	-	-	-
Beg. German	-	-	-	-
Beg. Russian (intensive)	15	NH-IH	IM	IM/6
Beg. Spanish	20	NL-IH	NH	NM/8
Int. French	32	NH-A	IM	IM/12
Int. German	24	IL-S	A	IH/8
Int. Russian	15	NH-IH	IM	IM/6
Int. Spanish	-	-	-	-
Adv. French	8	IL-S	IH	IH/3
Adv. German	-	-	-	-
Adv. Russian	-	-	-	-
Adv. Spanish	20	IL-A+	IM	IH/7
French Lit./Cult.	8	IH-A+	IH	A/5
German Lit./Cult.	-	-	-	-
Russian Lit./Cult.	-	-	-	-
Spanish Lit./Cult.	12	IM-A+	IH	IH/6

Key: 1. Beginning = enrolled in first/second semester language course
2. Intermediate = enrolled in third/fourth semester language course
3. Advanced = enrolled in fifth semester language course
4. Lit./Cult. = enrolled in literature or culture course taught in a foreign language

4. Literature and Culture courses

French (n = 8): Intermediate High

Spanish (n = 12): Intermediate High

While it may seem natural to equate level of course with level of proficiency, this tendency must be avoided, especially as the level of

instruction advances. Tentative as the data is, it does reflect an important characteristic of the ACTFL/ETS scale: the ranges on the scale are not fixed increments on an absolute scale but rather increasingly larger segments that require progressively greater command of function, content, and accuracy of language use. Thus, while the Beginning Spanish students were rated predictibly in the Novice range, all the other students, with the exception of the Intermediate German students, were rated in the Intermediate range. The fact that 48 of these students were enrolled in what are, for instructional purposes, called "advanced" courses does not mean that they demonstrate proficiency at the Advanced levels.

As more testers are certified and more students are evaluated using the oral proficiency interview, statistics related to the relationship of course level and proficiency level will be more reliable. Such statistics will be useful to departments in colleges and universities in determining how their students compare, in terms of proficiency, with students at similar levels of instruction in other institutions.

Summary of results. To summarize the analysis of the data generated for the study, the following answers can be given for the nine research questions:

1. Professors can learn to conduct and rate oral proficiency interviews effectively after completing an intensive four-day workshop and a supervised practicum that includes a critique of 24 interviews. It should be noted, however, that considerable additional practice is generally necessary to become a truly proficient and comfortable interviewer and rater.
2. Initially, testers spend approximately 40 minutes per interview and rating sessions. These times can be expected to decrease as the tester becomes more familiar with the procedures. The length of time spent also depends upon the level of proficiency of the person being interviewed since higher levels require longer interviews.
3. Facilities such as those normally available to college professors are sufficient to obtain ratable interviews.

4. The oral proficiency interview can have a significant impact on materials and techniques used in foreign language courses. It is also useful as a motivational factor to reinforce the importance of oral goals and objectives.
5. The question of what presage and context variables are associated with successful use of the oral proficiency interview was not answered in the study. Experience has shown, however, that interviewers should themselves be at least at level 3+ on the ILR scale.
6. Problems most frequently encountered by novice testers include: (1) assuming the role of tester, not teacher, in the interview; (2) using probes appropriately in the interview; and (3) assigning an appropriate rating, especially in the intermediate range.
7. Further training needs identified by novice testers and the evaluators who critiqued their interviews include more observation of live and taped interviews, short workshops to practice rating, and practice in the incorporation of a range of techniques and topics in the interview to assure a ratable sample.
8. Both the participants in the study and the evaluators agreed that it is possible to <u>interview</u> one's own students in a valid and reliable manner. With respect to rating the interviews, it was found that the ratings of beginning testers were identical to those of experienced evaluators 40% of the time. This percentage meets the recently implemented ACTFL/ETS criteria for certification as an oral proficiency rater. It should be noted that differences should not cross major boundaries from one level to another as was the case 50% of the time in this study.
9. Mean proficiency ratings were in the Novice range for students enrolled in "Beginning" language courses and Intermediate for students enrolled in "Intermediate" and "Advanced" language courses as well as in literature and culture courses. The data support the

contention that the tendency to equate proficiency level with course level is not a valid one.

Chapter Four

THE MATERIALS DEVELOPMENT AND DISSEMINATION COMPONENT

The third component of PROJECT OPT consisted of the development and dissemination of materials pertaining to oral proficiency testing. In addition to publications, this component included workshops and papers given as a result of the project.

PUBLICATIONS

To date, the project has produced three publications on the topic of oral proficiency testing. Copies of the publications are included with this report.

1. Oral Proficiency Testing in College-Level Foreign Language Programs. A Handbook for Foreign Language Departments.

This handbook is designed to acquaint foreign language departments in colleges and universities in the United States with recent developments in oral proficiency testing in foreign language programs. It provides an overview of the rationale, development, procedures, and implications of oral proficiency evaluation in the context of the teaching mission of college and university foreign language departments. In addition, it reports the findings of PROJECT OPT. The handbook is not meant to be a training manual but rather an introduction to the principles and techniques of oral proficiency testing.

The handbook was published by the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages with funds from the project. Through an agreement with C. Edward Scebold, Executive Director of ACTFL, chairpersons of foreign language departments that are members of the Association of Departments of Foreign Languages in four-year colleges and universities of the United States were invited to reserve a free complementary copy. A total of approximately 700 copies were requested and distributed by the ACTFL Materials Center in May, 1985.

2. Oral Proficiency Testing in Russian. A Handbook.

This 35-page handbook was compiled by the directors of PROJECT OPT for

use in a one-day familiarization workshop to acquaint Russian professors with the principles and procedures of oral proficiency assessment. It was used for the first time at a meeting of the Northern New England Chapter of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL) on October 15, 1983. Funds for the handbook and the workshop were provided by the Central University Research Fund of the University of New Hampshire.

The handbook, which is the first publication of its kind for teachers of Russian in academic settings, provides an overview of recent developments in oral proficiency testing in general and treats specific aspects of oral proficiency testing in Russian. Like the handbook published by ACTFL, this volume is intended to be an introduction to principles and techniques and is not a training manual. A limited number of the original edition of 200 copies is available from Dr. Aleksandra Fleszar (Mayewski), Associate Director of PROJECT OPT, Department of German and Russian, Murkland Hall, University of New Hampshire, Durham, NH 03824. The handbook is also available on microfiche from the Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC ED 240 869).

3. POPT: Publication of PROJECT OPT

During the second year of the project (1983-4), two issues of POPT, a newsletter for participants and friends of PROJECT OPT, were published and disseminated (See Appendix D). This newsletter served as the primary means of communication among the members of the Northern New England network of college and university faculty who are currently working with oral proficiency testing.

Although funding for PROJECT OPT has ended, the Directors will continue to serve as facilitators for the network and will publish, when possible, additional issues of POPT to enable network members to maintain contact and to encourage further use and development of oral proficiency evaluation procedures in the region.

4. Further publications. In addition to the three publications already disseminated, the directors are preparing an article on the research component

of PROJECT OPT for submission to a national journal on foreign language pedagogy.

WORKSHOPS AND PAPERS

PROJECT OPT also resulted in the presentation of workshops and papers on the topic of oral proficiency testing. A summary of these activities follows:

1. Workshops and papers presented by Dr. Barbara H. Wing, Director of PROJECT OPT.

In response to requests from secondary and post-secondary level foreign language educators and supervisors, Dr. Wing presented the following workshops during the grant period.

a. A Workshop for Foreign Language Teachers in the Nashua, NH, School System. 25 March 1983.

b. A Workshop for Foreign Language Teachers in the New Hampshire Seacoast Region. 11 May 1983.

c. A Workshop for French Teachers of Immersion Classes at Nippissing University College in North Bay, Ontario, Canada. 12 July 1983.

d. A Workshop for Foreign Language Teachers at Rivier College, Nashua NH. 11 July 1984.

e. Consultant in Spanish for A Workshop on Elicitation Techniques, a pre-conference workshop at the 1984 Northeast Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages on April 14 in New York City.

Dr. Wing also presented a paper on PROJECT OPT on November 23, 1983, at the 1983 Annual Meeting of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages in San Francisco.

2. Workshops and papers presented by Dr. Aleksandra Fleszar (Mayewski), Associate Director of PROJECT OPT.

1. A Familiarization Workshop in Russian for the Northern New England Chapter of the Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. University of New Hampshire, 15 October 1983.

2. "Oral Proficiency Testing: Results and Applications to Overseas Programs." Paper presented at the Annual Meeting of the American

Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. New York, December 1983.

3. "Assessing Language Proficiency Levels." Chairperson of panel discussion at the Annual Meeting of the American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages. Washington, December, 1984.

4. Member of the AATSEEL Committee on Testing and Professional Development. 1984-85.

Chapter Five

CONCLUSIONS

PROJECT OPT, a research and training project, was designed to achieve three objectives:

1. to determine the feasibility of incorporating specific techniques of oral proficiency evaluation in foreign language courses at the college level;
2. to create a network of foreign language professors in northern New England colleges and universities trained in the use of oral proficiency evaluation procedures;
3. to develop a handbook of oral proficiency evaluation techniques for college-level foreign language faculty.

Answers to the nine research questions investigated in the project indicate that it is feasible to use the ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Interview in foreign language courses at the college and university levels. Participants reported benefits that included a more objective evaluation of oral skills, the potential for increased student motivation, and a positive impact on the development of curriculum, materials, and instructional techniques in courses. They also pointed out that the process may be even more useful at the departmental program level where important decisions, such as certifying for transcript or professional reasons, are involved. Problems encountered in implementing oral proficiency evaluation techniques were deemed to be resolvable. The most pressing question, that of ensuring sufficient numbers of certified testers with adequate time for conducting and rating interviews, will require the development of creative solutions, such as use of networks to provide testers for the institutions within the region.

There is a network in place in northern New England that will continue to function although funding for the project has ceased. At least one proposal has been submitted to the Fund for the Improvement of Post Secondary Education (FIPSE) that will expand the network through training workshops at the University of New Hampshire during the summers of 1986 and 1987. These

workshops are part of a larger effort to incorporate oral proficiency testing into the Program in International Perspectives, an interdepartmental effort, at the university. The proposal also includes funding for foreign language instruction for professors to improve their proficiency in languages that are related to their special areas of expertise.

In addition to the handbook, Oral Proficiency Testing in College-Level Foreign Language Programs, the project produced the handbook for Russian professors and was the subject of papers and workshops at national and regional meetings. It is likely that over 1000 people were reached, in one way or another, by the various activities and products of the project.

PROJECT OPT provided answers to questions that are representative of what faculty members, in particular, often ask about the procedures and results of oral proficiency evaluation. During the project, additional questions were raised that should be the object of future investigations. Some of these questions are:

1. How does oral proficiency testing, which represents a global evaluation of functional language use, relate to achievement testing of the oral skills, which relates to how effectively students have learned a particular corpus of material within a specified period of time?
2. What revisions are needed in the ACTFL/ETS descriptions of levels to provide for higher levels of interrater reliability upon completion of the training period?
3. How has incorporation of oral proficiency testing actually affected courses and programs now that the procedures have been used in several colleges and universities around the country for three years?
4. How does the concept of proficiency, which has been suggested as an organizing principle for the teaching of foreign languages, affect the development of curriculum, materials, and instructional techniques for the other skills of listening, reading, and writing,

and the development of cultural sensitivity and understanding?

5. How can training, interviewing, and rating services be provided most efficiently and economically to faculties and students in post-secondary and secondary institutions in the United States in order to link together the several networks that already exist?

Answers to these questions are being formulated on campuses around the country and in agencies like the American Council an the Teaching of Foreign Languages and the Educational Testing Service. The growing number of informed and trained testers is an indication of the responsibility that foreign language teachers assume for their own and their students' accountability. It represents what has been a continuing commitment of the foreign language teaching profession: the improvement of the quality of teaching and learning in their courses and their programs.

Appendix A:

Directories of Workshop Personnel and Participants

1. Staff Directory
2. Project Tape Evaluators
   August Workshop Consultants
3. Participant Directory

PROJECT OPT

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1/83

PROJECT OPT

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Appendix B:

Instruments

1. Questionnaire I: Participant Questionnaire
2. Questionnaire II: Participant Project Report
3. Questionnaire III: Consultant Report of Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques
4. Participant Rating Sheet for Practice Interviews
5. Participant Rating Sheet for Project Interviews
6. Participant Project Log
7. Evaluator Rating Sheet

PROJECT OPT

Participant Questionnaire

Please answer all questions by circling the letter of the one most appropriate answer. If you indicate other, explain briefly in the space provided. Read all the answers in each item before marking the most appropriate one. Note that the term "target language" refers to the foreign language you are currently teaching.

Section One: Preparation — Do not write in this column

1. I first learned/studied the language I am now teaching:
   a) informally as a child
   b) in school (elementary, junior high or high school)
   c) in a college or university
   d) other_____ 1.___/___

2. I first learned/studied the language I am now teaching because:
   a) I needed it to communicate with the people around me.
   b) I wanted to speak and understand the language.
   c) It was a requirement for my course of study.
   d) other_____ 2.___/___

3. My undergraduate major field of study was:
   a) French
   b) German
   c) Spanish
   d) Russian
   e) other _____ 3.___/___

4. As an undergraduate I:
   a) received academic credit for a study-abroad program in a target-language country.
   b) did not receive academic credit for a study-abroad program. 4.___/___

5. As an undergraduate, I lived or travelled in a target language country (exclusive of study for credit) for a total of:
   a) more than three months.
   b) less than three months.
   c) not at all. 5.___/___

6. As an undergraduate student:
   a) I had a formal course in foreign language teaching.
   b) I did not have a formal course in foreign language teaching. 6.___/___

7. As an undergraduate I:
   a) student-taught a foreign language.
   b) did not student-teach a foreign language. 7.___/___

8. As a graduate student:
   a) I received academic credit for study in a target language country.
   b) I did not receive academic credit for study in a target language country. 8.___/___

9. As a graduate student I lived or travelled in a target country (exclusive of study for credit) for a total of:
   a) three months or more.
   b) less than three months.
   c) not at all. 9.___/___

10. As a graduate student I:
   a) had a formal course in foreign language teaching.
   b) did not have a formal course in foreign language teaching. 10.___/___

11. As a graduate student I taught a language course:
   a) regularly.
   b) occasionally.
   c) once.
   d) never. 11.___/___

Section Two: Professional Growth

12. In the past three years I have spent a total of _____ in a target language country.
   a) no time.
   b) 1-5 weeks.
   c) 6-15 weeks.
   d) 15 weeks - 9 months.
   e) more than 9 months. 12.___/___

13. I have served as a group leader for students on a trip to a foreign country:
   a) never.
   b) 1-3 times.
   c) 3-6 times.
   d) more than 6 times. 13.___/___

14. I am a member of _____foreign language association(s).
   a) state/regional.
   b) national/international.
   c) (a) and (b).
   d) no. 14___/___

15. I attend state and national professional meetings:
    a) two or more times a year.
    b) once a year.
    c) every 2 or 3 years.
    d) every 5 or 6 years.
    e) almost never. 15.___/___

16. At professional meetings I _____ attend a session on foreign language teaching methodology.
    a) always.
    b) usually.
    c) occasionally.
    d) never. 16.___/___

17. I read foreign magazines or newspapers in the target language:
    a) weekly.
    b) monthly.
    c) quarterly.
    d) never. 17.___/___

18. I read a professional journal of foreign language teaching:.
    a) regularly.
    b) occasionally.
    c) never. 18.___/___

19. Previous to this workshop I have:
    a) attended a short session on oral proficiency testing (1-4 hours).
    b) attended a day-long workshop.
    c) attended a workshop for more than one day.
    d) not attended any such sessions. 19.___/___

Section Three: Curriculum and Instruction

Questions 20-25 are to be answered for three levels of language instruction (elementary, intermediate, advanced). Write the letter of the appropriate answer in the blank following each question number.

20-22. In my department, there are stated oral objectives for language courses.
    a) yes.
    b) no.

20. _____ Elementary level. 20.___/___
21. _____ Intermediate level. 21.___/___
22. _____ Advanced level. 22.___/___

23-25. At my institution students have access to a:
a) library-type language laboratory.
b) a dial-access language laboratory.
c) no language laboratory.
d) other laboratory facilities.

23. _____ Elementary. 23.___/___
24. _____ Interdemediate. 24.___/___
25. _____ Advanced. 25.___/___

For the following questions, answer only for those levels that you have taught in the past two years.

26-28. In the absence of departmental objectives, I I have developed specific oral objectives for my language courses.
a) yes.
b) no.
c) not applicable.

26. _____ Elementary. 26.___/___
27. _____ Intermediate. 27.___/___
28. _____ Advanced. 28.___/___

29-31. In my language classes (exclusive of courses specifically designed for conversation), a student's speaking ability constitutes _____ of the final course grade.
a) 0-10 %
b) 11-20 %
c) 21-30 %
d) 31-40 %
e) more than 40 %.

29. _____ Elementary. 29.___/___
30. _____ Intermediate. 30.___/___
31. _____ Advanced. 31.___/___

32-34. The average size of my language classes is:
a) 1-8 students.
b) 9-16 students.
c) 17-24 students.
d) 25-30 students.
e) more than 30 students.

32. _____ Elementary 32.___/___
33. _____ Intermediate. 33.___/___
34. _____ Advanced. 34.___/___

35-37. In my opinion, a reasonable class size to develop speaking skills is:

a) 1-8 students.
b) 9-16 students.
c) 17-24 students.
d) 25-32 students.
e) more than 32 students.

35. _____ Elementary. 35.___/___
36. _____ Intermediate. 36.___/___
37. _____ Advanced. 37.___/___

38-40. In my language classes, the language of instruction is _____ the target language.

a) always.
b) almost always.
c) sometimes.
d) rarely.
e) never.

38. _____ Elementary. 38.___/___
39. _____ Intermediate. 39.___/___
40. _____ Advanced. 40.___/___

41-43. In my language classes, I give speaking tests:

a) weekly.
b) two or three times a semester.
c) once a semester.
d) never.

41. _____ Elementary. 41.___/___
42. _____ Intermediate. 42.___/___
43. _____ Advanced. 43.___/___

44-46. Students in my language classes are required to use the language laboratory:

a) daily.
b) weekly
c) not required.
d) other _____.

44. _____ Elementary. 44.___/___
45. _____ Intermediate. 45.___/___
46. _____ Advanced. 46.___/___

47-49. When speaking with students outside of class:

a) I almost always use the target language.
b) I sometimes use the target language.
c) I almost always speak English.

47. _____ Elementary. 47.___/___
48. _____ Intermediate. 48.___/___
49. _____ Advanced. 49.___/___

50. I and/or my department use oral tests for:
    a) placement.
    b) proficiency (meeting a standard for the language requirement, graduation, or certification).
    c) placement and proficiency.
    d) none of the above purposes.
    e) other _____. 50___/___

51. My college/university has a language requirement based on:
    a) number of semesters/quarters successfully completed.
    b) a proficiency exam.
    c) other criteria _____.
    d) no requirement. 51.___/___

Section Four: Background Information

Circle the letter of the one most appropriate answer.

52. Sex:
    a) female.
    b) male. 52.___/___

53. Age:
    a) 22-29.
    b) 30-37.
    c) 38-45.
    d) 46 plus. 53.___/___

54. Native language.
    a) English.
    b) French.
    c) German.
    d) Russian.
    e) Spanish.
    f) other _____. 54.___/___

55. Are you a native speaker of the language you teach?
    a) yes: language_____
    b) no. 55.___/___

56. My highest academic degree is:
    a) Bachelor's degree.
    b) Master's degree.
    c) Doctoral degree.
    d) other _____. 56.___/___

57. My Bachelor's degree is in:
    a) Language.
    b) Literature.
    c) Language and Literature.
    d) other _____. 57.___/___

58. My Master's degree is in:
    a) Language.
    b) Literature.
    c) Language and Literature.
    d) other _____. 58.___/___

59. My Doctoral degree is in:
    a) Language/linguistics.
    b) Literature.
    c) Language and Literature.
    d) other _____. 59.___/___

60. Number of years teaching college-level foreign language courses (exclusive of graduate-student teaching assignments):
    a) 1-3.
    b) 4-7.
    c) 8 plus. 60.___/___

61. Academic rank:
    a) Instructor/Lecturer.
    b) Assistant Professor.
    c) Associate Professor.
    d) Professor.
    e) other _____. 61.___/___

62. Academic Status:
    a) Tenured.
    b) Non-tenured Tenure Track.
    c) Non-Tenure Track. 62.___/___

63. Primary foreign language now teaching:
    a) French.
    b) German.
    c) Russian.
    d) Spanish. 63.___/___

64-67. My oral skills have been evaluated in an oral interview-type examination:
    a) yes.
    b) no.
    64. _____ as an undergraduate. 64.___/___
    65. _____ as a graduate student. 65.___/___
    66. _____ in applying for a job. 66.___/___
    67. _____ other circumstances _____. 67.___/___

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

PIN _____

PROJECT OPT

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03824

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College of Liberal Arts
Murkland Hall

QUESTIONNAIRE II

As a participant in PROJECT OPT, you have had the opportunity to learn about and practice using the ACTFL/ETS Oral Proficiency Interview. Now we would like you to reflect on your experiences and answer the questions in this survey regarding use of the process in foreign language courses at the college-level.

In some sections of this questionnaire, you are asked to give specific data from the log you kept while completing the second set of 16 tapes. In other sections, you are asked to comment on various aspects of the process and its application to foreign language courses. Please answer the latter questions as fully as you can, using additional sheets if necessary. Before you start to complete the questionnaire, please indicate your PIN on the line below. This information is necessary for data analysis purposes.

Please return the completed questionnaire by May 25, 1983 to:

PROJECT OPT
AMLL/Murkland 209
University of New Hampshire
Durham, NH 03824

Thank you for your assistance in this phase of the project. We look forward to your return to Durham in August. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact Sandi Mayewski or me at (603) 862-1218.

_____
Barbara H. Wing
Project Director

PIN_____ Date_____

1 May 1983

Question 1: The questions in this section relate to time factors.

1.1 Please supply the following information using data from your log:

Interview #	Course Name	Rating	Preparation Time*	Interview Time	Rating Time
A-1					
A-2					
A-3					
A-4					
A-5					
A-6					
A-7					
A-8					
B-1					
B-2					
B-3					
B-4					
B-5					
B-6					
B-7					
B-8					
Total Time					

* Preparation Time: Indicate time spent arranging for interview, reviewing techniques, assembling equipment, etc.

Question 1 (continued)

1.2 Do you consider the time spent on preparing, interviewing and rating worthwhile with respect to the following: (Please explain)

1.2.1 Your own professional development:

1.2.2 Student development:

1.2.3 Program development:

1.2.4 Other:

1.3 Do you have any suggestions for making more efficient use of time in the three phases of preparing, interviewing and rating? Please explain.

1.4 Does the time factor have implications for use of the oral proficiency interview in foreign language classes? Please explain.

Question 2: The questions in this section relate to facilities and equipment used.

2.1 Describe the facilities and equipment that you used while conducting the interviews.

2.2 Was arrangement and/or acquisition of equipment a problem for you? Please explain.

2.3 If the tape recordings were not clear enough to make valid decisions, what caused the problem?

2.4 What changes, if any, would you make in conditions, facilities and equipment to obtain clearer recordings?

Question 3: The questions in this section relate to the specific course from which you selected the 8 students who comprised the group.

3.1 Describe the specific course from which you selected 8 students to be interviewed:

3.1.1 Name of course: _____

3.1.2 Prerequisite for course: _____

3.1.3 Number of students enrolled in class: _____

3.1.4 Text(s): _____

_____

3.1.5 Objectives of course: _____

_____

_____

3.1.6 Percentage of in-class time devoted to:

_____Listening _____Reading _____Grammar explanations
____% in target language

_____Speaking _____Writing _____Cultural topics
____% in target language

_____Other (explain)

3.2 Summarize the ratings of the 8 students from the class by indicating the number of students rated at each level on the scale:

_____Novice Low _____Intermediate Low _____Advanced

_____Novice Mid _____Intermediate Mid _____Advanced Plus

_____Novice High _____Intermediate High _____Superior

3.3 Indicate the rating and final course grade for each student:

	Rating	Final Course Grade
A-1		
A-2		
A-3		
A-4		
A-5		
A-6		
A-7		
A-8		

Question 3 (continued):

3.4 Did you prepare your students for the interview? If so, in what way?

3.5 With regard to the particular course from which you selected these 8 students, what effect has the use of the oral proficiency interview had on your thinking about:

3.5.1 Goals and objectives

3.5.2 Curriculum development

3.5.3 Instructional materials

3.5.4 Instructional techniques

3.5.5 Testing procedures

3.5.6 Other

3.6 Do you plan to make any specific changes in this course, based on your experiences with the oral proficiency interview? Explain.

Question 3 (continued):

3.7 Do you plan to suggest/make any changes in other courses or in your language program, based on experiences with oral proficiency testing? Explain.

3.8 In your opinion, what specific functions can the oral proficiency interview serve in a language course such as the one from which you selected your candidates?

3.9 What functions can the oral proficiency interview serve in your total program?

3.10 How have you presented the oral proficiency interview to your colleagues?

3.11 How have your colleagues reacted to the oral proficiency interview?

Question 4 The questions in this section relate to your experiences with your own students and with the students who have not studied with you.

4.1 In the interview phase:

4.1.1 What specific differences in your own behavior and feelings were you aware of while interviewing your own students as opposed to those with whom you were not acquainted?

4.1.2 What specific differences in the behavior and feelings of the students were you aware of while interviewing your own students as opposed to those with whom you were not acquainted?

4.2 In the rating phase, what specific differences in your own behavior and feelings were you aware of while rating your own students as opposed to those with whom you were not acquainted?

4.3 Do you think that your interviews with your own students are as valid and as reliable as your interviews with students you did not know previously? Explain.

4.4 Do you think it is possible for an interviewer to conduct and rate oral proficiency interviews with his/her own students in a valid and reliable manner? Explain.

4.5 What can an interviewer do to obtain valid and reliable interviews with his/her own students?

Question 5: The questions in this section refer to problems you encountered in conducting and rating the interviews.

5.1 What problems did you have with regard to:

5.1.1 Arranging for interviews

5.1.2 Conducting the interview:

5.1.2.1 In the Warm-up

5.1.2.2 In the Level Check

5.1.2.3 In the Probes

5.1.2.4 In the Wind-up

5.1.3 Your role in the process: Factors associated with:

5.1.3.1 Your proficiency in the target language

5.1.3.2 Assuming the role of interviewer, not teacher

5.1.3.3 Conducting several interviews in a row

5.1.3.4 Other

5.1.4 The candidate's role: Factors associated with:

5.1.4.1 (un)willingness to talk

5.1.4.2 Fear of failure

5.1.4.3 Other

5.1.5 Rating the interviews: Factors associated with:

5.1.5.1 Ratability of sample

5.1.5.2 Clarity of descriptors in the ACTFL/ETS Rating Scale

5.1.5.3 Other

5.2 Please describe any problems that you have not discussed in the previous sections. (Use other side if necessary.)

Question 6: The questions in this section relate to interviewer training and further development of the oral proficiency interview.

6.1 What further training do you need to become more proficient in using the interview and rating techniques?

6.2 What aspects of the oral proficiency interview process need further development, clarification or revision?

6.3 What questions do you have with regard to use of the oral proficiency interview in foreign language courses?

6.4 What topics and activities would you like to see included in the August workshop?

6.5 Funding for PROJECT OPT officially ends in September 1983. If you would like to see the project continue, what direction do you recommend for the future?

End of questionnaire
Thank you

PROJECT OPT

Questionnaire III
Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques

Interviewer_____ Evaluator_____ Date_____
(PIN) (name)

I. The questions in this section concern the elicitation techniques of the interviewer. They are divided into sections that correspond to the phases of the interview. Using the key, please circle the number that most appropriately and consistently describes the performance of the interviewer in the four tapes you evaluated.

KEY: 5 ALWAYS, 4 ALMOST ALWAYS, 3 USUALLY, 4 SELDOM, 1 NEVER

A. Warm-up

1. Puts the candidate at ease.	5	4	3	2	1
2. Uses an appropriate level.	5	4	3	2	1
3. Uses an appropriate length.	5	4	3	2	1

B. Level Check

4. Moves from warm-up to level check smoothly.	5	4	3	2	1
5. Makes reasonable estimate of candidate's level.	5	4	3	2	1
6. Samples language in several content areas.	5	4	3	2	1
7. Stays on topic long enough to get ratable sample.	5	4	3	2	1

C. Probes

9. Probes at appropriate level (i.e., one level above language elicited during level check.)	5	4	3	2	1
10. Probes sufficiently (at least 3 or 4 times) to establish ceiling.	5	4	3	2	1
11. Develops probes naturally from topics of conversation in level check.	5	4	3	2	1
12. Alternates smoothly between level checks and probes.	5	4	3	2	1

D. Mini-checks (situations, ask and tell, etc.)

13. Uses mini-checks at appropriate point (last third) in the interview.	5	4	3	2	1
14. Introduces mini-checks smoothly and clearly.	5	4	3	2	1
15. Uses appropriate mini-checks.	5	4	3	2	1

E. Wind-down

16. Winds down after probes and mini-checks.	5	4	3	2	1
17. Leaves candidate with feeling of accomplishment.	5	4	3	2	1

F. Over-all interviewing techniques

18. Speaks at a normal rate of speed.	5	4	3	2	1
19. Is friendly but objective.	5	4	3	2	1
20. Allows candidate to speak without correction.	5	4	3	2	1
21. Uses yes/no questions appropriately (at low-levels or as a lead-in to higher level).	5	4	3	2	1
22. Accepts pauses without prompting candidate.	5	4	3	2	1
23. Allows candidate to speak without interruption.	5	4	3	2	1
24. Permits candidate to do most of the talking.	5	4	3	2	1
25. Takes the candidate to the highest level of which he/she is capable.	5	4	3	2	1

II. In this section, the questions concern your perceptions of differences, if any, in interviewing and rating techniques relative to the interviewer's previous knowledge of the candidate's proficiency. In the four interviews you critiqued for this interviewer, two candidates were students who had studied with the interviewer and two were people who had not studied with him/her. Please answer the questions and explain your answers when asked to do so.

1. Were you able to tell that some of the candidates had studied with the interviewer while others had not?
_____Yes _____No

2. If you answered 'YES', please answer questions 2.a. through 2.h. If you answered 'NO', please go to question 3.

2.a. Did the interviewer explicitly refer to a shared experience (e.g., in class) with the student?
_____Yes _____No

2.b. Did the student explicitly refer to a shared experience with the interviewer?
_____Yes _____No

2.c. Did the interviewer indicate by some other means that he/she knew the candidate?
_____Yes _____No
(If 'YES', please explain.)

2.d. Did the candidate indicate by some other means that he/she knew the interviewer?
_____Yes _____No
(If 'YES', please explain.)

2.e. Did the interviewer achieve a ratable sample for those students he/she seemed to know?
_____Yes _____No
(If 'NO', please explain.)

2.f. Did the interviewer achieve a ratable sample for those students he/she did not seem to know?

_____Yes _____No

(If 'NO', please explain.)

2.g. Do you agree with the rating of those candidates that the interviewer seemed to know?

_____Yes _____No

(If 'NO', please explain.)

2.h. Do you agree with the rating of those candidates that the interviewer did not seem to know?

_____Yes _____No

(If 'NO', please explain.)

III. In this section you are asked to rate the interviewer's overall elicitation and rating techniques. Using the key, circle the most appropriate number for each item.

Key: For a person who has participated in a four-day intensive training workshop, has received a written critique on a set of eight practice tapes, and is now completing a second set of 16 tapes, this interviewer rates:

3 HIGH (Top Third), 2 AVERAGE (Middle Third), 1 LOW (Bottom Third)

1.	Interviewing techniques	3 2 1
2.	Accuracy of rating	3 2 1
3.	Potential for becoming a proficient interviewer	3 2 1
4.	Potential for becoming a proficient rater	3 2 1

If you have rated this interviewer HIGH or LOW in any of the 4 items, please indicate any specific characteristics or behaviors not mentioned in Part I of this questionnaire that contributed to the rating. (Use other side if necessary.)

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End of Questionnaire III

PROJECT OPT

RATING SHEET FOR PRACTICE INTERVIEWS

Interviewer Project Identification Number (PIN) _____ Workshop Consultant Name _____

Candidate No.	First Name	Course Name	Interviewer Rating	Consultant Rating (Candidate No., Rating, Comments)
1				
2				
3				
4				
5				
6				
7				
8				

Participant name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Preferred evening hours _____

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PROJECT OPT

RATING SHEET FOR PROJECT INTERVIEWS: GROUP A

Interviewer Project Identification Number (PIN) _____ Workshop Consultant Name _____

Candidate No.	First Name	Course Name	Interviewer Rating	Consultant Rating (Candidate No., Rating, Comments)
A- 1				
A- 2				
A- 3				
A- 4				
A- 5				
A- 6				
A- 7				
A- 8				

Participant name _____ Telephone _____

Address _____ Preferred evening hours _____

PROJECT OPT

UNIVERSITY OF NEW HAMPSHIRE
DURHAM, NEW HAMPSHIRE 03824

Department of Ancient and Modern Languages and Literatures
College of Liberal Arts
Murkland Hall

PROJECT OPT LOG

As you are doing the Phase II Project Interviews, please use these pages to keep a log of the following information:

1. Time spent on the project (page 1.) Please keep an accurate record of the amount of time you spend in the following tasks associated with the project:

    1. Arranging for interviews.
    2. Conducting interviews.
    3. Rating interviews.

2. Perceptions and problems regarding the interviews (pages 2 and 3.) Please note any specific or general impressions, questions or problems that occur to you while interviewing and rating.

On May 1, 1983 you will receive the second and final questionnaire for PROJECT OPT. You will need information from the sheets in this log to complete the questionnaire. The questionnaire should be returned to the PROJECT OPT office by May 15, 1983. Please bring your log to the August workshop.

PROJECT OPT TIME LOG

INTERVIEW	Arrangements	Interview	Rating
A-1			
A-2			
A-3			
A-4			
A-5			
A-6			
A-7			
A-8			
B-1			
B-2			
B-3			
B-4			
B-5			
B-6			
B-7			
B-8			
TOTALS			

Total Time:_____

PROJECT OPT: Perceptions and Problems - Group A

As you do the Project Interviews, please describe any perceptions or problems that occur during the process. The items may relate specifically to a particular interview or be of a general nature.

INTERVIEW

A-1

A-2

A-3

A-4

A-5

A-6

A-7

A-8

PROJECT OPT: Perceptions and Problems - Group B

As you do the Project Interviews, please describe any perceptions or problems that occur during the process. The items may relate specifically to a particular interview or be of a general nature.

INTERVIEW

B-1

B-2

B-3

B-4

B-5

B-6

B-7

B-8

PROJECT OPT

Phase II: Project Tapes

Rating Sheet

Interviewer_____ Evaluator_____ Date_____
(PIN)

Candidate's Name	Interviewer Rating	Evaluator Rating	Candidate studied with Interviewer? (YES / NO / Don't Know)
1			
2			
3			
4			

Appendix C:

Raw Data

1. Questionnaire I: Participant Profile
2. Questionnaire II: Participant Project Report
3. Questionnaire III: Consultant Report of Interviewer Elicitation and Rating Techniques

PROJECT OPT

Participant Questionnaire

Please answer all questions by circling the letter of the one most appropriate answer. If you indicate other, explain briefly in the space provided. Read all the answers in each item before marking the most appropriate one. Note that the term "target language" refers to the foreign language you are currently teaching.

Section One: Preparation	Response Frequencies
1. I first learned/studied the language I am now teaching:	
a) informally as a child	7
b) in school (elementary, junior high or high school)	10
c) in a college or university	5
d) other_____	2
2. I first learned/studied the language I am now teaching because:	
a) I needed it to communicate with the people around me.	6
b) I wanted to speak and understand the language.	9
c) It was a requirement for my course of study.	8
d) other_____	1
3. My undergraduate major field of study was:	
a) French	6
b) German	3
c) Spanish	5
d) Russian	3
e) other _____	7
4. As an undergraduate I:	
a) received academic credit for a study-abroad program in a target-language country.	9
b) did not receive academic credit for a study-abroad program.	15
5. As an undergraduate, I lived or travelled in a target language country (exclusive of study for credit) for a total of:	
a) more than three months.	8
b) less than three months.	4
c) not at all.	12
6. As an undergraduate student:	
a) I had a formal course in foreign language teaching.	9
b) I did not have a formal course in foreign language teaching.	15

7. As an undergraduate I:
   a) student-taught a foreign language. 10
   b) did not student-teach a foreign language. 14

8. As a graduate student:
   a) I received academic credit for study in a target language country. 7
   b) I did not receive academic credit for study in a target language country. 17

9. As a graduate student I lived or travelled in a target country (exclusive of study for credit) for a total of:
   a) three months or more. 13
   b) less than three months. 4
   c) not at all. 7

10. As a graduate student I:
   a) had a formal course in foreign language teaching. 9
   b) did not have a formal course in foreign language teaching. 15

11. As a graduate student I taught a language course:
   a) regularly. 17
   b) occasionally. 4
   c) once. 1
   d) never. 2

Section Two: Professional Growth

12. In the past three years I have spent a total of _____ in a target language country.
   a) no time. 3
   b) 1-5 weeks. 5
   c) 6-15 weeks. 3
   d) 15 weeks - 9 months. 7
   e) more than 9 months. 6

13. I have served as a group leader for students on a trip to a foreign country:
   a) never. 1
   b) 1-3 times. 4
   c) 3-6 times. 7
   d) more than 6 times. 12

14. I am a member of _____foreign language association(s).
   a) state/regional. 1
   b) national/international. 3
   c) (a) and (b). 19
   d) no. 1

15. I attend state and national professional meetings:

a) two or more times a year.	15
b) once a year.	6
c) every 2 or 3 years.	2
d) every 5 or 6 years.	0
e) almost never.	1

16. At professional meetings I _____ attend a session on foreign language teaching methodology.

a) always.	8
b) usually.	7
c) occasionally.	7
d) never.	1
	no response: 1

17. I read foreign magazines or newspapers in the target language:

a) weekly.	13
b) monthly.	7
c) quarterly.	4
d) never.	0

18. I read a professional journal of foreign language teaching:.

a) regularly.	11
b) occasionally.	12
c) never.	1

19. Previous to this workshop I have:

a) attended a short session on oral proficiency testing (1-4 hours).	4
b) attended a day-long workshop.	2
c) attended a workshop for more than one day.	2
d) not attended any such sessions.	16

Section Three: Curriculum and Instruction

Questions 20-25 are to be answered for three levels of language instruction (elementary, intermediate, advanced). Write the letter of the appropriate answer in the blank following each question number.

20-22. In my department, there are stated oral objectives for language courses.
a) yes.
b) no.

20. _____ Elementary level.	a:12, b:12
21. _____ Intermediate level.	a:12, b:12
22. _____ Advanced level.	a: 7, b:15
	no response: 2

23-25. At my institution students have access to a:
a) library-type language laboratory.
b) a dial-access language laboratory.
c) no language laboratory.
d) other laboratory facilities.

23. _____ Elementary. a:19, b:4, c:0, d:1
24. _____ Interdemediate. a:19, b:3, c:1, d:1
25. _____ Advanced. a:14, b:4, c:4, no response:2

For the following questions, answer only for those levels that you have taught in the past two years.

26-28. In the absence of departmental objectives, I I have developed specific oral objectives for my language courses.
a) yes.
b) no.
c) not applicable.

26. _____ Elementary. a:6, b:9, c:7, no response:2
27. _____ Intermediate. a:7, b:8, c:6, no response:3
28. _____ Advanced. a:8, b:6, c:6, no response:4

29-31. In my language classes (exclusive of courses specifically designed for conversation), a student's speaking ability constitutes _____ of the final course grade.
a) 0-10 %
b) 11-20 %
c) 21-30 %
d) 31-40 %
e) more than 40 %.

29. _____ Elementary. a:7, b:4, c:4, d:6, e:2, no response:1
30. _____ Intermediate. a:3, b:6, c:7, d:2, e:0, no response:6
31. _____ Advanced. a:6, b:3, c:3, d:1, e:1, no response:10

32-34. The average size of my language classes is:
a) 1-8 students.
b) 9-16 students.
c) 17-24 students.
d) 25-30 students.
e) more than 30 students.

32. _____ Elementary a:2, b:9, c:7, d:2, e:3, no response:1
33. _____ Intermediate. a:3, b:9, c:4, d:4, e:0, no response:4
34. _____ Advanced. a:8, b:6, c:2, d:1, e:0, no response:7

35-37. In my opinion, a reasonable class size to develop speaking skills is:

a) 1-8 students.
b) 9-16 students.
c) 17-24 students.
d) 25-32 students.
e) more than 32 students.

35. _____ Elementary. a:8, b:13, c:2, d:0, e:0, no response:1
36. _____ Intermediate. a:6, b:15, c:0, d:0, e:0, no response:3
37. _____ Advanced. a:10, b:9, c:1, d:0, e:0, no response:4

38-40. In my language classes, the language of instruction is _____ the target language.

a) always.
b) almost always.
c) sometimes.
d) rarely.
e) never.

38. _____ Elementary. a:6, b:9, c:7, d:1, e:1
39. _____ Intermediate. a:7, b:8, c:4, d:1, e:0, no response:4
40. _____ Advanced. a:14, b:3, c:1, d:0, e:0, no response:6

41-43. In my language classes, I give speaking tests:

a) weekly.
b) two or three times a semester.
c) once a semester.
d) never.

41. _____ Elementary. a:6, b:7, c:7, d:3, no response:1
42. _____ Intermediate. a:1, b:7, c:7, d:4, no response:5
43. _____ Advanced. a:0, b:6, c:4, d:5, no response:9

44-46. Students in my language classes are required to use the language laboratory:

a) daily.
b) weekly
c) not required.
d) other _____.

44. _____ Elementary. a:7, b:13, c:4, d:0
45. _____ Intermediate. a:0, b:14, c:4, d:1, no response:5
46. _____ Advanced. a:0, b:6, c:8, d:1, no response:9

47-49. When speaking with students outside of class:

a) I almost always use the target language.
b) I sometimes use the target language.
c) I almost always speak English.

47. _____ Elementary. a:0, b:15, c:8, no response:1
48. _____ Intermediate. a:4, b:13, c:3, no response:4
49. _____ Advanced. a:7, b:10, c:0, no response:7

50. I and/or my department use oral tests for:

a) placement.	2
b) proficiency (meeting a standard for the language requirement, graduation, or certification).	2
c) placement and proficiency.	4
d) none of the above purposes.	14
e) other _____.	0
	no response: 2

51. My college/university has a language requirement based on:

a) number of semesters/quarters successfully completed.	7
b) a proficiency exam.	5
c) other criteria _____.	0
d) no requirement.	11
	no response: 1

Section Four: Background Information

Circle the letter of the one most appropriate answer.

52. Sex:

a) female.	11
b) male.	13

53. Age:

a) 22-29.	2
b) 30-37.	9
c) 38-45.	5
d) 46 plus.	8

54. Native language.

a) English.	17
b) French.	3
c) German.	3
d) Russian.	0
e) Spanish.	1
f) other _____.	

55. Are you a native speaker of the language you teach?

a) yes: language_____	7
b) no.	17

56. My highest academic degree is:

a) Bachelor's degree.	0
b) Master's degree.	9
c) Doctoral degree.	14
d) other _____.	1

57. My Bachelor's degree is in:

a) Language.	5
b) Literature.	5
c) Language and Literature.	8
d) other _____.	6

58. My Master's degree is in:

a) Language.	4
b) Literature.	10
c) Language and Literature.	9
d) other _____.	1

59. My Doctoral degree is in:

a) Language/linguistics.	2
b) Literature.	10
c) Language and Literature.	3
d) other _____.	2
	no response: 7

60. Number of years teaching college-level foreign language courses (exclusive of graduate-student teaching assignments):

a) 1-3.	10
b) 4-7.	6
c) 8 plus.	8

61. Academic rank:

a) Instructor/Lecturer.	8
b) Assistant Professor.	7
c) Associate Professor.	4
d) Professor.	4
e) other _____.	1

62. Academic Status:

a) Tenured.	10
b) Non-tenured Tenure Track.	5
c) Non-Tenure Track.	9

63. Primary foreign language now teaching:

a) French.	8
b) German.	4
c) Russian.	4
d) Spanish.	8

64-67. My oral skills have been evaluated in an oral interview-type examination:

a) yes.
b) no.

64. _____ as an undergraduate.	a:4, b:20
65. _____ as a graduate student.	a:3, b:21
66. _____ in applying for a job.	a:8, b:16
67. _____ other circumstances _____.	a:1, b:20

Thank you for completing this questionnaire.

PIN _____

Questionnaire II: Participant Project Report
Raw Data

QUESTION 1:

1.1:

	Participant ID Number	Preparation Time	Interview Time	Rating Time
Totals:	1	47 min.	364 min.	360 min.
	2	(little or no)	320 min.	320 min.
	4	60 min.	382 min.	363 min.
	5	42 min.	380 min.	123 min.
	6	155 min.	332 min.	410 min.
	9	55 min.	290 min.	120 min.
	10	320 min.	480 min.	480 min.
	11	402 min.	248 min.	645 min.
	12	510 min.	480 min.	480 min.
	13	90 min.	266 min.	233 min.
	14	450 min.	480 min.	540 min.
	15	201 min.	338 min.	298 min.
	16	105 min.	400 min.	55 min.
	18	--	420 min.	450 min.
	19	--	--	--
	20	--	285 min.	245 min.
	21	160 min.	275 min.	295 min.
	22	--	--	--
	23	175 min.	290 min.	170 min.
	24	245 min.	345 min.	345 min.
	25	345 min.	380 min.	510 min.
	27	120 min.	340 min.	300 min.

1.2: Time Spent Worthwhile

A. Your own development: Yes 21; No 1; Perhaps 1
B. Students' development: Yes 17; No 3; Blank 3
C. Program development:
less grammar, more conversation
to be seen (3)
yes but more time will tell (4)
yes (12)
blank (1)
what's all this data to be used for?
D. Other:
blank (20)
students eager to have a rating (2)
use video

1.3: Suggestions for more efficient use of timme

none (5)
get a testing room
better preparation
initial contact by mail, distribute explanation in written form
rate right after, skip taping (2)
need more practice
have grid in front of you during interviews
prepare list of questions
more situations
less preparation, gut feeling good indication
use secretary for sign-up
try not to listen to tapes so much (2)
check list of things to look for at each level

shorter interviews at lower level
skip preliminaries

1.4: Time factor implications

difficult because of size of class
written final, short
oral interview during finals, arranged

QUESTION 2:

2.1: Notes: put a towel under microphone to reduce random noise
put a sign on door to prevent interruptions

2.2: Was equipment arrangement a problem?

no (22)
blank (1)

2.3: Reason for unclear recordings:

timidity of interviewees
background noises (4)
students mumbling (2)
dying batteries
interviewing technique (2)
video, mike too far away
table-top mike
unravelled tape
did not check one recording level (2)
cell on mike bad
mike too far away
bad tape
blank (8)
no problems
forgot to turn recorder on

2.4: Changes in facilities, etc.:

better recorder (6)
lab psychology better than office (2)
plug instead of batteries
better quality sound in lab, lab office more relaxed (2)
place mike nearer
better surroundings (but did O.K.) (8)
blank (3)
none (3)
would not tape more than one per tape

QUESTION 3:

3.4: Did you prepare students?

yes (20)
general meeting (1)
handout (1)
each student got copy of quidelines (3)
explained purpose (15)
no (3)
mock interviews (1)
a little
students did informal estimates of themselves

3.5: Effect on course

A. Goals:

same (8)
more speaking (4)
too much time (1)
none (2)
made me think about objectives (2)
impress on students what they are communicating and to whom
clarified
relate rating to course expectations
rework the entire course
change objective to adhere more to grammar grid (2)

B. Curriculum development:

proposed two new courses
use more role playing (4)
slow change
build in more different types of language (2)
blank (4)
reworking entire sequence
curriculum already incorporates
none (7)
class vs. proficiency awareness
more audio
pre- and post-course interviews

C. Instructional materials:

same (2)
choose more OP oriented texts (3)
none (4)
blank (3)
use conversation cards (like situation cards) (2)
class vs. proficiency awareness
obtained "Intermediate" teaching aids
minimal (2)
select better exercises to go with OP
reworking the entire curriculum
use more native speaker materials
break students up into conversation groups

D. Instructional techniques:

role playing (2)
interview technique is not a teaching technique
more group work
more free exercises, fewer drills (11)
blank (2)
reworking entire curriculum
class vs. proficiency awareness (2)
same (2)
none (1)

E. Testing procedures:

use at end of course
more oral (7)
same (5)
blank (4)

role play
class vs. proficiency awareness
oral testing on a more regular basis (2)
always gave orals but reconsidering format

F. Other:

blank (19)
used for placement
used to evaluate achievement
start conversation early in the course
used to teach TA's, great help

3.6: Specific changes in the course:

change text and instructional materials (2)
situation use
stress oral (4)
restructure all courses
no (9)
only in testing (2)
more speaking if in power to do so (2)
blank (2)

3.7: Changes in other courses:

stress oral in final grades
use situations and role playing (2)
use interview for placement (2)
use interview for pre- and post-course testing (2)
use after intermediate (2)
change dealing with students
general direction for dept.
muse more questions
use test as a waiver for course
will try to convince colleagues of multi-section courses
stress oral in all courses (2)
persuade colleagues to use oral testing in 2nd and 3rd years
will readjust beginning program to guidelines
beginning courses use team approach and one personal interview
interview rating becomes part of permanent record
will not use, too much to add to already overburdened schedule
realistic approach; will use test more often
will use to find out why students who study abroad don't improve much
no, not this university !!!!
no, we already are in step
will use for elementary students after school program

3.8: Function in course you selected from:

establish an expected performance level
correspondence between grid and OPT can help to indicate acquisition
use only to improve discussion
provides better basis for evaluating in course performance
pre- and post-course evaluation (6) (not for grading, 1)
make course more relevant (2)
reinforce oral therefore motivate students (5)
external agency therefore motivates students
placement for freshmen
evaluate proficiency

diagnostic
addition to CV
supplemental for foreign travel but too time consuming for course
evaluating foreign experience acquisition
none except practice speaking (2)
none since not conversation course

3.9: Function in total program:

end of study (6)
part of record (4)
placement (8)
periodic testing (3) to increase OP, screening proficiency
feedback for motivation
use in conversation course
perhaps for course grade; problem since interview favors overseas experience
ideas for testing, but time factor a problem (2)
compare with other institutions results
blank
use for pre-, post-overseas experience
proficiency requirement
no total program
use to readjust courses for more realistic expectations
use to strengthen intermediate level

3.10: How presented to colleagues:

presented in a mini-workshop plus oral and written report (8)
showed situations to colleagues (2)
interested administration
we all (2) participated in the project
showed practice interviews (4)
enthusiastically then more realistically
briefly
informally (7)
cool but enthusiastically
offered to present; no result yet
yes

3.11: How colleagues reacted:

with interest (7)
like born-again Christians
in favor but apprehensive
wanted to be tested (2)
with polite interest (2)
used a lot of time (2)
interested but no following
blank
threatened, critical
little interest (2)
indifference (2)
interest and no interest (3)
high school enthusiastic, college not

QUESTION 4:

4.1: The interview phase:

A. Own behavior:

not me but others
I have all students (2)
more patient with other students (2)
none (2)
more relaxed with mine (6)
had to resist slanting toward known vocab and grammar (4)
? since interview more formal
only interviewed other students
presumed too much about students level
easier with other students
nice to get to know my students better

B. Students behavior:

own students nervous (5)
own students easier
no difference (8)
other students more nervous (4)

own students had covered all topics before
blank (3)

4.2: Rating own students vs. others:

none (6)
blank (3)
own slightly easier
surprised at difference between class and interview rating
harder on my weaker students
no difficulty but surprise at difference between class and interview rating
O.K. but would prefer not to rate own
disappointed with own students (2)
spent more time on own students
problems with interview not rating
before listening I thought they were doing better
easy to evaluate own students higher

4.3: Are own interviews as valid?:

yes (13) more problems with interview than rating
mostly (2)
I hope so
blank (2)
interviews, yes; rating, I'd rather not rate my own
by staying away from vocab/areas unknown to students rating may be too high
yes and no
preconceived idea of own students therefore may have geared the interview
yes but elicitation technique may be better with other students

4.4: Conduct and rate own students valid?:

yes but own more difficult
yes (16)
taping helps
guidelines should be clearer
avoid slanted questions (3)
takes discipline
another person helps

no, not possible
blank

4.5: How to get good interviews with own students:

get a colleague to sit in (4)
follow the guidelines (8)
prepare set of cards (difficult ones) and make sure you use them also on your own students
record and play back
rate 2 times (2nd, a day later)
use the same format for all
try to be objective
blank (3)
concentrate on the bulk rather than small points
avoid topics dealt with in class
don't prepare the students ahead of time

QUESTION 5:

5.1: Problems:

A. arranging for interview

none (8)
very difficult (8)
difficult with other students (5)
ask for more volunteers than needed

B. warm-up

trouble maintaining simple
none (7)
differentiation between warm-up and level check
difficult (2)
too long (3)
developmental
blank (3)
warm-ups occurred before recorder was on (2)
pulling into a routine
overcoming nervousness

C. level check

finding the level (when fluency differed from grammar and vocab)
knew students therefore knew level
started too high
too long
falling into a routine
ability to test level 4
O.K. (3)
didn't always probe enough
difficult (4)
blank (4)
too cautious
warm-up and level check, same

D. probes

problems making it rational
haphazard

difficulty in eliciting structures probed for
blank (5)
problem with own students
problem with lower students
problem with breakdown of fluent speakers (2)
too high
didn't probe enough
no problem
when and where to probe
need variety of probes
routine
somme trouble
too much time
supported opinion and news get no answer (2)
limited topics

E. wind-up

none (5)
what to say at the end (7)
routine
blank (5)
getting it on tape (2)
too long
time factor

5.1.3: Your role:

A. your proficiency

none (7)
O.K. (4)
dislexic
very important
not as proficient as should be (5)
accent interfered
inclination to adjust to the level of students
the greatest factor
no 4+ to check on

B. Interviewer, not teacher:

sometimes teacher (7)
easy (4)
felt like rebelling against OPT
blank
very hard (7)
progressing (2)

C. Several interviews in a row:

problem (3)
boredom
fatique (5)
made easier (3)
no more than three
repeated questions (4)
one at a time (2)
O.K. if enough time between to rate it (2)
no more than two (2)

D. Other:

blank (17)
explaining to candidates what the interview is for
low institutional support therefore trouble getting candidates
time due to illness
yes and no questions
enthusiastic but questions his/her own ability

5.1.4: Candidate's role:

A. Willingness to talk:

very willing (6)
O.K. (3)
discussion prior to interview helped (2)
some problems (4)
blank (2)
only one (7)

B. Fear of failure:

none (7)
blank
at the outset but later O.K. (2)
some associated interview with grade
some (3)
problem with unknown students (2)
taken care of by discussion before interview (5)
some with lower level students
some problems caused by early breakdown

C. Other:

blank (16)
students got stuck on topics
high grade students who place low were upset
mumbling
all were eager to get their results
use of English is a problem
sodium penathol helps!!

5.1.5: Rating the interview:

A. Ratability of sample:

no problem (2)
ball park figure, when a problem, relistened
problem with one
some problems (6)
love interviews therefore no problem
difficult
blank (4)
could have shortened some interviews by rating in the head earlier
questions on cultural and vocab aspects
keep referring to the guidelines
three tapes had technical problems
0-2 not ratable because of equipment
2+ not ratable because of my language proficiency
small group to pick from

B. Clarity of ACTFL descriptions

problem with Intermed. Mid and Intermed. High (3)
problem with low end of scale
blank (5)
will save questions for next meeting
descriptions curriculum bound
problem with 4+ and 2 (2)
scale O.K. but need more practice
need language-specific guidelines
some O.K., some bad
needs work, too complicated, too many sheets to consult
clear and over-specific
some are ambiguous
very good
workshop helped
too much like FSI, not academic
Russian needs work

5.2: Other problems:

blank (14)
time problem (3)
    did not get to listen to tapes till much later
    hard to focus in the middle of school day or exam week
    needs too much time (2)
situations on cards make students nervous (situation seems to be the problem
use of English is a problem
stkudent personalities cause problems
3-5 ratings need more discussion--i.e., Parisian vs. southern French vs. Canadian French
Russian needs more level due to low mastery
I'd rather teach than interview

QUESTION 6: Interviewer training and further development of interview

6.1: What further training do you need?:

interpersonal skills of interviewing--need to be introduced to the art of interviewing in English first
observe live or videotaped interviews by experienced interviewers (4)
more practice and discussion of rating interview and techniques (11):
    elicitation techniques (6):
        - lower levels
        - level checks (taken for granted)
        - probes (2)
        - supported opinion
        - superior level
    rating (3):
        - can place in range but not level (2)
        - still need critique
more leisure time in which to prepare and do them (5)
training periods (2): a complete course, another workshop
clearer descriptions of novice high, intermed. low/mid/high, and advanced low
conduct interviews with partner to check accuracy and become more aware of different phases of interview (2)
become a qualified trainer of interviews
be interviewed
practice in varying questions

more linguistic skill
clearer sense from OPT as to what service they are performing
more interviews
more controlled evaluation of results

6.2: What aspect of OPT interview needs further development?:

standards and guidelines (9)
OPT vs. education (we still have terminal 2+'s)
OPT vs. grading
specific sample questions
wind-up
time factor
formal at workshop vs. informal on video and cassettes
experience
guidelines on vacab and culture
blank (7)
vocab-specific situation cards

6.3: Questions on use of OPT in courses

blank (12)
how to use it in grading process (2)
entrance and exit interview
reliability (more than one person needed)
too burdensome to use in courses (2)
role playing can be used
work needed on implications for curriculum plan
should it be used as an achievement test
how can this be done in one section without the rest of the faculty participating?
compare notes with others
how many times should a student go through it in a college career

6.4: Activities for August workshop:

blank (4)
more practice interviews
each person present and defend their rating
watch an experienced interviewer
session on problems
summary of info. from this questionnaire (2)
fine tuning elicitation techniques
examine types and signs of linguistic breakdown
how we can get more involved and facilitate
OPT in university programs (2)
national standardization
each participant speak on changes in courses
practical application in class (2)
what if candidate more proficient than interviewer?
development of list of writing and reading in OPT
situations geared to Russian
grammar vs. level
courses and OPT--how to incorporate OPT into curriculum
talk to consultant
videotaped interviews (2)

6.5: Future directions for OPT:

workshop for trainers to turn colleagues into interviewers and spread out evaluation duties (3)

workshops to train interviewers (3)
regional workshops
involvement of secondary school teachers (2) (fall NHATFL)
development of proficiency testing as intergral part of program and essential part of student records (3):
- oral interview as standard for schools and colleges like SAT or GRE
- ongoing work with regional group of high schools and colleges to make oral, listening, reading and writing proficiency testing an integral part of programs
- integrate OPT with other areas of language study to truly rate proficiency, not just achievement
- use as basis for language education

develop techniques for role-playing situations that allow options that get away from translation problems
periodic demonstrations through the NH Regional Center (NEW project)
blank (4)
study in each of the languages relationship between proficiency levels and course levels
development of specific materials to facilitate instruction dealing with various kinds of language tested for narration, description, hypothesis, etc.
broad explorative direction to access foreign language teaching in U.S. and work to improve it

Questionnaire III

Comparison of Interviewer/Evaluator Ratings of Candidates (1): Agreed/Disagreed

All Languages

Language	Agreed: # of cases	Disagreed: # of cases
French	17/61%	11/39%
German	6/38%	10/62%
Russian	7/44%	9/56%
Spanish	6/19%	26/81%
Totals	36/39%	56/61%

Non-ratable: 5

Questionnaire III

Comparison of Interviewer/Evaluator Ratings of Candidates (2):
Difference: # of steps

All Languages

	Difference: # of steps:					
	UP			DOWN		
Language	1	2+	%UP	1	2+	%DOWN
French	4	-	36%	6	1	64%
German	3	1	40%	5	1	60%
Russian	1	2	38%	4	1	62%
Spanish	11	2	59%	8	1	41%
Totals	19/79%	5/21%	47%	23/85%	4/15%	53%

Questionnaire III

Comparison of Interviewer/Evaluator Ratings of Candidates (3):
Differences: Major Boundary/Within Level

ALL LANGUAGES

Language	Major boundary differences	Within level differences
French	5/45%	6/55%
German	7/70%	3/30%
Russian	4/50%	4/50%
Spanish	9/41%	13/59%
Totals	25/49%	26/51%

Questionnaire III

Comparison of Evaluator/Interviewer Agreement in Ratings of Own Students/Not Own Students

ALL LANGUAGES

Language	Own Students: Agree	Own Students: Disagree	Not Own Students: Agree	Not Own Students: Disagree
French (n=28)	5/36%	9/64%	12/86%	2/14%
German (n=16)	1/13%	7/87%	5/62%	3/38%
Russian (n=16)	3/38%	5/62%	5/62%	3/38%
Spanish (n=32)	3/19%	13/81%	3/19%	13/81%
Totals (n=92)	12/26%	34/74%	25/54%	21/46%

Questionnaire III

Direction of Evaluator/Interviewer Disagreement in Ratings of Own Students/Not Own Students

ALL LANGUAGES

Language	n	UP	DOWN	N/R	n	UP	DOWN	N/R
French	9	4/44%	5/56%	-	2	-	2/22%	-
German	7	3/43%	4/57%	-	3	1/33%	2/67%	-
Russian	5	2/40%	2/40%	1/20%	3	-	3/100%	-
Spanish	13	6/46%	5/39%	2/15%	13	7/54%	4/31%	2/15%
Totals	34	15/44%	16/47%	3/9%	21	8/38%	11/52%	2/10%

Appendix D:

Materials Developed for the Project (not bound in Report)

1. Oral Proficiency Testing in College-Level Foreign Language Programs. Published by ACTFL Materials Center, 1984.

2. Oral Proficiency Testing. Handout for Workshop for the Foreign Language Teachers of Nashua, New Hampshire. March 25, 1983.

3. Oral Proficiency Testing in Russian. Handout for Workshop for the Northern New England Chapter of the American Association of Slavic and East European Languages.

4. Testing Oral Proficiency Through the Interview. Handout for the Workshop in Foreign Teaching, Rivier College, 1984.

5. POPT (Publication of Project OPT). Volume I, Number 1 (March, 1984) and Number 2 (Fall, 1984).